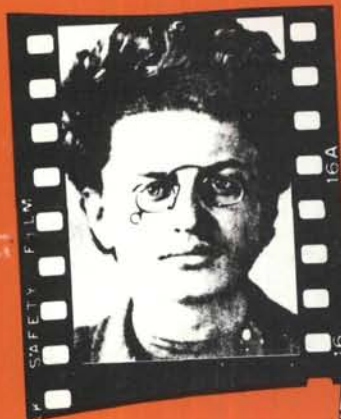


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APRIL 1984 VOL. LXII No. 4 ISSN 0013-7073

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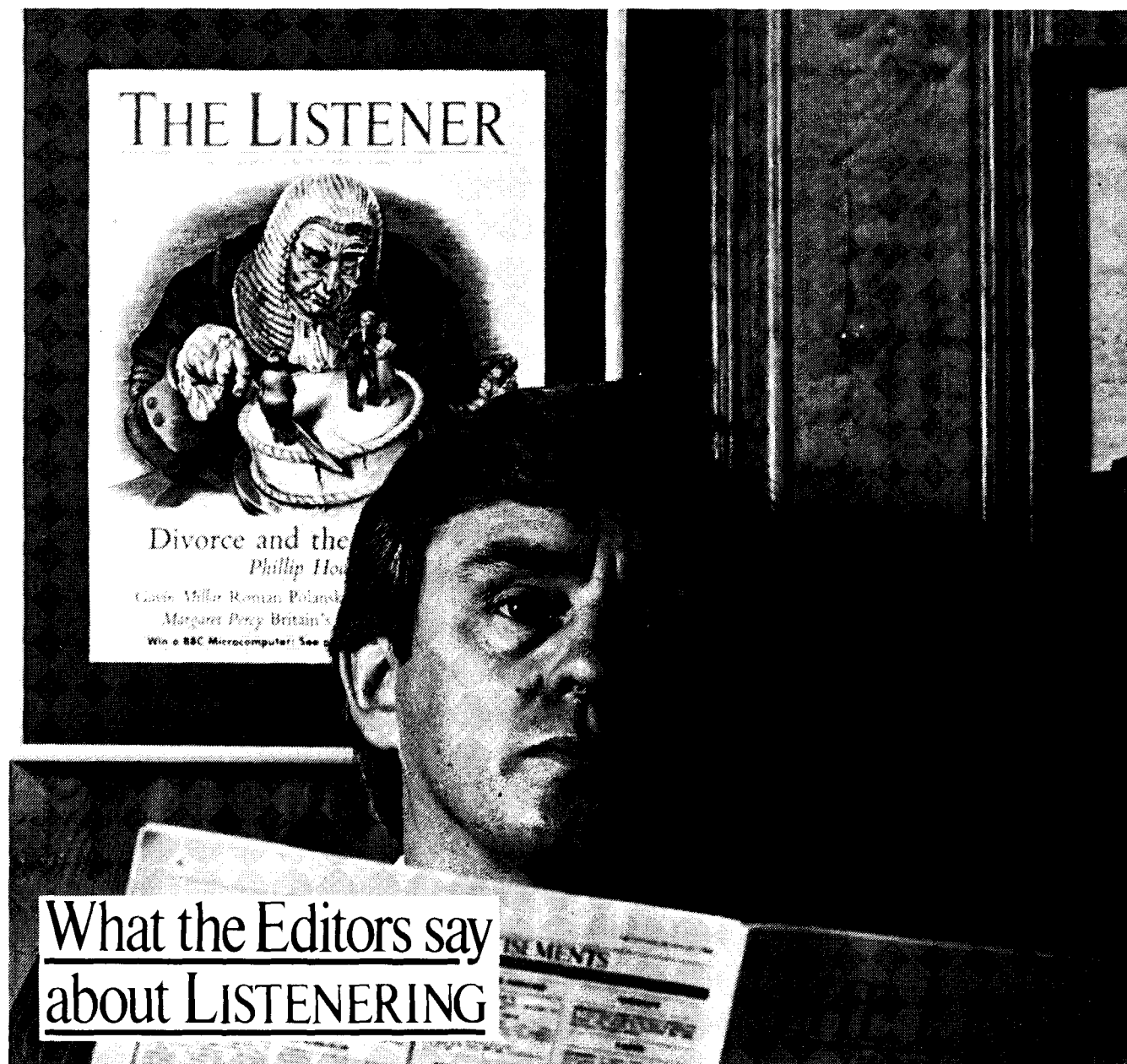
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Alison Neville

## Poetry, London, 1944

OVER THE LAST FORTY YEARS whenever I've been short of money I've looked along the rows of books on my shelves for the first editions that attract a certain sort of vulture. I never ever sell them; in the end my unremaindered pride restrains me. Even if I haven't from one year to the next taken them down to read, I know the day will come when a reissue or an obituary will send me back to the text. I'd loathe to think of them belonging to anyone who'd boast about their price at auction—"Illustrated, you see, appreciating all the time", or even worse, "The jacket's in such fine condition—makes all the difference."

Among the things I'd never part with are some ancient copies of *Poetry London*, sold me at Zwemmer's in Charing Cross Road by Ruthven Todd. He passed them over without that subtle glance of instant recognition I'd hoped would pass between us. I was still in the Sixth Form, determined to become a doctor, if only to annoy my teachers; but part of me refused to relinquish earlier plans, and these included being a poet myself, and living with a poet, contracting consumption or syphilis and dying young, with a bottle of absinthe at my bedside. It was just my luck that this was London in the Forties instead of Paris in the days of Baudelaire or the Goncourt brothers—how decadent the times, I rather thought, when serving in a bookshop for a regular salary could be preferred to starving in garret or gutter.

I went out of the shop and walked down to the National Gallery, discouraged. There I climbed the steps and picked a seat in front of Christ turning the moneylenders out of the Temple to sit down and study my purchases. There were poems by Kenneth Allott, John Heath-Stubbs, Kathleen Raine, and some by people I'd never heard of, whose work seemed to me not so very much better than my own. I formed a resolve and borrowed my friend Martha's typewriter, which was a German model, brought with her from Vienna, and had the z and y transposed, making all my adverbs look Slavonic.

Weeks later when term had started and I was buried deep in biology, chemistry, physics, the unbelievable letter came. Yes, the editor liked the poems I had sent him. Yes, he would publish them. Had I any more? I

had. I typed and sent them: then heard, for many months, no word.

I would have been heartbroken, I suppose, if there had not been so much else to think about. I attended interviews in London and Cambridge, wrote examination papers, did practical tests and submitted laboratory notebooks. Momentously, I left school, left Berkhamsted, left my billet and the family who'd housed me for nearly all the war years so far, said goodbye to them, friends, teachers and all, and went to earn my living at a pharmaceutical firm, leaving my mother's flat in Hampstead at eight in the morning, returning at seven in the evening, working for four hours on a Saturday, and all for thirty shillings a week. The gutter and the garret, when they became a real possibility, were somehow less attractive.

Only a week of this full and happy existence, for nobody could call it life, had passed when another letter came—not so exciting in one way as that precious note from *Poetry London*, in every other as greatly to be treasured. I was offered an exhibition at University College, London; it was worth thirty pounds a year, scarcely a fortune even then. But because of the award and my adequate examination results I was entitled to a Senior County Scholarship. Term began, my letter said, at Leatherhead in Surrey, where the Faculty of Medical Sciences had its wartime home in the buildings of a boys' preparatory school, on 4 October. Would I kindly let the secretary know as soon as possible whether I would wish to take up their offer?

I kindly did: I gave in my notice at the British Drug Houses, who, considering that they had only employed me for a week, took an extremely benevolent, not to say paternalistic, view of my sunnier prospects, and managed the formalities of my release from "work of national importance" with great expedition. Perhaps their enthusiasm was related to the two hundred pounds' worth of progesterone in solution I'd spilt on the laboratory floor about the third day of my sojourn with them, when simple fatigue and the bullying of my fellow technician who didn't like my posh accent dulled my usually quite good reflexes. Mopping up the liquid with clean cotton wool (later we spent days extracting, puri-

fyng, and crystallising the hormone, so that in the end only about ten pounds' worth was lost) we became good friends. After she knew that I was leaving we got on even better, and she gave me a useful box of crayons on my last morning.

**B**EING A MEDICAL STUDENT and learning to manage life in a bisexual community absorbed most of my attention for the next six months. There were a hundred and twenty pre-clinical students at Leatherhead, in two years of sixty each; in each year there were forty boys and twenty girls. Ena and I gravitated to each other almost at once, although we didn't share lodgings until the following summer. She was as much of an outsider as I was, being German, half-Jewish, the daughter of a dealer in *objets de vertu*, and consequently considered more than a little dangerous by well-brought-up girls in grey flannel suits, worn with yellow pullovers and a string of seed pearls, "Mummy's gift when the Higher School results came." They were very nice girls, most of them, and one at least became a good friend later; but they made assumptions, no worse or better than, but different from, Ena's and my own. We two spoke a similar language, taught me initially by my father's Polish accent and alien habits, later by his bankruptcy, later still by the friends I made during the Berkhamsted years, almost all refugees from Europe, none of them looking for much help from parents dead or deracinated. My school friends knew, of course, about my poetry, but at Leatherhead I kept that light well under its bushel.

During the Easter vacation there wasn't much to do. In the mornings I tidied the flat in Parliament Hill Fields, walked the dog, shopped a little for my mother, who was working full time at the Ministry of Information; and sometimes sat in the library at Wentworth House, and thought how much better I'd have been to Keats than poor maligned Fanny; and one thing led to another. I put on my navy corduroy trousers, and borrowed without asking the jacket of one of my sister's suits, wine and white herringbone tweed, the shoulders hugely padded; set in my buttonhole a spray of polyanthus from the scrap of garden my country-loving mother currently cultivated, and took a number 24 bus to the corner of Tottenham Court Road, where Sammy from Leatherhead had said he'd meet me round about twelve if I'd like to see the film at the Dominion. The arrangement was a vague one: I made it vaguer still, deciding before noon that he wouldn't be coming and that I didn't, now I'd studied the stills, at all want to see the film. Then I began to walk briskly along Oxford Street, not quite thinking about where I was going, or why, or what I meant to do when I got there. I found Manchester Square quite easily, and the corner house that was Ivor Nicholson and Watson's offices, one or two rooms of which apparently housed the staff of *Poetry London*. It took me almost as long as the walk itself to summon up

courage enough to open the door and go in.

I don't remember much about the building, or how I found my way upstairs. At about two I was sitting outside the *PL* office talking to a youngish oldish man in tweeds I thought might be Ivor Nicholson or Somebody Watson, who explained that Tambi was always a bit unpredictable, but generally got back from lunch about three. He would find me something to look at while I waited, if I thought I would like to wait.

Having got so far, I wasn't going to go away again, and accepted reading matter, wondering if I should chuck my dying buttonhole in a wastepaper basket. It was just as well I didn't, as almost the first words Tambi said to me, returning to his office at half past four, were, "I would have guessed that you would wear flowers. I must tell you how much I love to see young girls wearing fresh flowers."

**I**T WAS AN ADEQUATELY POETIC greeting; causing me in the fifteen months that followed not a little expense, since providing buttonholes for his girls was no part of Tambi's programme. Providing bitter, on the other hand—which I soon learned to think of as a wartime substitute for absinthe, and probably better for my liver—he managed with experienced ease. As soon as the pubs opened that evening we were in one; then another, and another. I soon lost count, not even knowing after about eight o'clock which side of Tottenham Court Road we were on, or even which side of Oxford Street. I had eaten nothing since breakfast and felt extremely ill; I could not tell where hunger ended and drunkenness began, nor whether I was experiencing bliss or an intensity of suffering. Faces loomed up, hands were shaken, cheeks kissed. I was, I heard him saying, absolutely the latest, greatest, altogether freshest, newest, youngest—only, he declared, sixteen! "I'm eighteen now", I said, "I wrote those things two years ago." "Sixteen, eighteen, only a girl under twenty could imagine it made the slightest difference, such youth, such freshness. She wore flowers in the lapel of her jacket", he told somebody who'd just put his arm round me higher up than I thought right when he and I were both drinking Tambi's bitter—and how dare he, unless he too were a poet? "Are you a poet?" I asked him, and he gave a hard, hateful laugh and said, "For heaven's sake, everyone Tambi knows is a poet; don't imagine for a moment there's anything unusual about that." "I didn't like that man", I said to Tambi later, when we were eating curry in Mortimer Street. "Which man?" "The tall one with the droopy moustache. I mean, I know he writes poetry, but he seems so cynical." "He writes cynically." "I suppose he would." Later in the Wheatsheaf Maclaren-Ross pointed a stick at me and said, "My dear child, get out of here double quick time. I'm telling you for your own good, that chap's the biggest bastard this side of Calcutta, and he poisons his women when he's had

enough of them." Tambi roared with laughter. I went to the loo and clung to the wall weeping.

He had a flat, no, he had borrowed a flat, in an alleyway opposite the New Theatre. It was on the first floor, over a fish and chip shop. "Would you like fish and chips?" On top of curry I thought I wouldn't. "I should warn you that Stewart and Erika may be here, but we have an arrangement." They were not. There were two rooms, a bigish one with high windows and two beds, one at the back with a sink, a stove, a single bed, and a gramophone. Tambi put on a kettle and a gramophone record. I threw away my flowers.

"What is it? It's very sad."

"Debussy. The only quartet he ever wrote. Have some tea."

I felt better drinking tea. Then we undressed, and I discovered that under the reefer jacket and the heavy Aran sweater he was pitifully thin, every rib distinct and gleaming.

"I'm sure you don't eat enough. Do you eat properly, I mean, every day?"

"If I feel like it. There is no other reason for eating that I can see."

I explained to him eagerly the other reasons. But he had had quite recently, he told me, a chest X-ray; somebody else, perhaps his wife, thinking he might have tuberculosis.

"Your wife?"

But I didn't need to worry, he assured me: the chest X-ray was clear, a fine healthy pair of lungs, the doctor said.

"Your wife, though?"

"She worries, although we are separated. She is diabetic, and must never have children. You have beautiful hips and should have many babies."

But not yet, I thought, and thanked God for the advice of more experienced Martha who'd sent me to a clinic when I'd told her of my determination to lead an artist's life—even inventing a boy-friend in the Forces for me to soften the doctor's heart. When we had made love and he had no doubt registered how inexperienced the experienced young poetess was, I looked at my watch—no, more likely his, I think I had none then. "My God, it's past two o'clock. How shall I get home?"

"Where is home?"

"Hampstead, the village end."

"We will find a taxi."

There were no taxis. Grandly, using two pennies I fortunately had on me, he dialled Godfrey Davies. "How much will it cost?" I asked. "A great deal, I should think. But you could write him a cheque."

It cost fifteen shillings, all I had left in my purse. Moreover, my mother had waited up for me. Normally her night-shift at the Ministry would have kept her there until five in the morning, so that was a rotten bit of luck. She was angry, a new phenomenon. I explained as much as I dared. I'd no idea, I said, that she'd have been so worried; how could I guess that on one night, of all the possible nights—? And what, she pointedly asked,

would I have been doing, pray, all those other nights when she *hadn't* been worried? I could take care of myself, wasn't I a medical student, didn't I naturally know what precautions were necessary?

"My God, if your father were alive!"

Eventually we got to bed, if not to sleep. That was the start of a double life, fifteen months spent in a sort of delirium I called Soho, with apyrexial episodes of study, friendship, politics, soon examinations, student research projects I called Leatherhead. I bounced up and down on the Southern Railway, not quite needing a season ticket. At college I used Tambi as an alibi. "She's having an *affaire*, you see, with her publisher", one lad said to another, accounting for my new offhand comradeliness, my absence from the Saturday night hop, the pub at the end of the road on Friday evenings. The girls in grey suits and lemon yellow twin-sets rather drew aside their skirts, and I moved into digs with Ena who, asking no questions, soon knew all and kept her judgments to herself.

IN SOHO I WAS INTRODUCED as medical student, even once or twice as doctor, a distinction at once disclaimed, as I'd have needed to be an infant prodigy—and much resented, as well as feared, the conversation turning away from writing to personal health. Asked by total strangers at the bar what was likely to go wrong with their livers, or which clinic should they be attending, I froze, gave no answers, found the questions diminishing; and I could not do with being smaller than I was in this entirely alien world. Most of Tambi's friends were kind to me, knowing him so much better than I did. Stewart Scott I soon met, and beautiful Erika, so thin and dark, wary at first but soon protective, guessing I'm fairly sure how scared I was that anyone might plumb my terrors. A young sailor called Alan Ross wept over the recent loss of a friend; I offered conventional comfort, in short supply in that milieu. He blessed me, and told me in broken tones that I was worth the lot of them—his gesture including everyone in the Wheatsheaf at the time. "Not really", I said, pleased, believing him. On VE Day we got extremely tight on a thimbleful of gin at the Arts Theatre Club, and I wondered if I would ever again in all my life be so happy.

And there was Lynn Chadwick who'd been ill, I think, after a row with his family which somehow involved his not wanting to be an architect. He lived in Cheyne Walk with a Canadian wife, fair-haired, witty, poised—all the things I longed to be and knew I never would; in their company I felt almost at ease. But much of the time we spent, Tambi and I, with people whose names I scarcely knew, who weren't themselves there to be known. People lent him houses, flats, studios, even once a barge on the Thames, and then obligingly removed themselves, so that he, and for a little while I too, could marvel at their places. A painter's potter wife's studio I recall, somewhere in Barnes, a garden flat not half a mile

from where I'd been born in Fitzjohn's Avenue, a house near Camden Town where for once the owner himself, who was Eric Crozier, welcomed us on a freezing night with Irish coffee, the first I'd ever tasted.

Pubs too, principally the Wheatsheaf and the Salisbury, whose mirrors, sconces, shining woods I loved; sometimes, though not so often, the Fitzroy—there seemed to be some ill-feeling between Tambi and the man behind the bar. There was a customer there too whose garb and manner reduced Tambi's own to insignificance. Tambi wore no jewellery, and though his hair was long for 1944, it never reached below his shoulders. This other, though, played the piano stripped on summer evenings to the waist, necklaces swaying against his pale skin as he moved in rhythm—and *his* hair waved down his back almost to where his trousers started. So, though he was neither brown nor beautiful, he outshone my shining Tamil, and we preferred the Wheatsheaf in the early evenings.

We never went to a theatre, a cinema, a concert or even a poetry reading. We seldom ate in a restaurant. We made love a good deal and I found it boring. "Nobody would think", he reasonably said, "you could have written poems like those: do you know how misleading they are?" "They aren't misleading. It's just that I didn't know what to expect. Martha told me—" But he wasn't interested in what Martha'd told me, guessing rightly as it turned out that she had known no more than I. Nor had I any idea what more he wanted or expected. I never refused, was always tender, his staring ribs inducing in me that same helpless guilt that Oxfam posters do; I had no headaches, and though often tired to death between revision, travelling up to Waterloo, and chasing from one bar to another until thank God they closed, I didn't say so. Never tell them you have a headache or feel too tired, Martha had said. I never did.

Stewart was ill. He had malaria, romantically, contracted as a little boy in India. Not so romantically, he shook and sweated in a ward at Charing Cross Hospital. I pulled rank, boasting that I'd be allowed to see him outside regular visiting hours. I was, though I can't imagine why, medical students being of no importance to anyone except, just then, Erika, Stewart and Tambi. I took him, naturally, flowers. "You can't go to see a patient in hospital without flowers. Or grapes", my mother said, entering once again briefly my Soho life, this time with approval as naturally she quite liked to think of one of my wicked new friends tossing on a bed of pain. Later I rang Erika at her office. "He wasn't too bad. He said to tell you how he misses you, and will you take him in some toothpaste on Wednesday evening." My stock rose, but only for a little while. The end was near.

"This is Anne. She is a very nice girl, a tart", Tambi said, in some pub or other. We shook hands, Anne and I. "She is coming back with us." She did. While she was downstairs in the loo, he said, "She is a Lesbian, all tarts are Lesbian, she thinks you have very nice legs. She says she would like to watch us together. I told her you were a

very unusual girl, quite without inhibitions. I said you wouldn't mind."

I thought: I didn't mind, naturally. That is to say, my nature put up no special barriers against Anne's pleasure. Nurture was another matter. I was pretty sure I ought to mind. But there she was, and it was too late. "Thanks very much, dear", she said afterwards. "That's all right", I said.

That was the last time I slept with him. I spent one more weekend in the flat, alone in the back room. Stewart was out of hospital, and he and Erika were very kind to me, as if I and not he were the convalescent. I hadn't actually yet emerged from shock and anaesthesia. In the Wheatsheaf or the Salisbury or the Fitzroy we'd sat over our drinks, the bitter I still hated, getting through my half pint dutifully, though all that might have been pleasure to me then was duty, I believe. And Tambi had got up, kissing me perfunctorily on the forehead. "I have to see Birgitta, did I tell you, she is this very nice girl in Brompton Road, you will like her very much when I take you to see her." Of course he never did. I hope I wouldn't have gone, anyway.

ONCE AND ONLY ONCE my two worlds intersected; there was no audible collision, no sparks flew. My poems were printed in *Poetry London* Number Ten, a huge hardbacked volume, quite unlike its slender predecessors, with Mervyn Peake's illustrations to "The Ancient Mariner", and reams of verse as bad or worse than mine, some a good deal better. I had a free copy, I hid it away from family and friends, still do for that matter. I've since been told that Tambi banked on all his unknown poets, many of whom were girls as ignorant and greedy as myself, buying at least a dozen copies to distribute among their relatives—the money flowing in would have been very useful. Mine never flowed, but I was paid a royalty of fifteen shillings, the first money I ever earned from writing, or fringe activities connected with that trade. One morning in the Common Room at Leatherhead, the Dean of the Faculty most unusually circulated among his students; a research physiologist of some eminence, he spent most of his time in government establishments while the Subdean looked after his staff and undergraduates. To my amazement they came up to me where I stood, cocoa cup in hand: the Dean held a newspaper, a Sunday paper though it was a weekday morning. The Subdean introduced us.

"We're very proud of you", the Dean said. I thought my ears misled me, but then my eyes did too, for he held out the paper, open. There was a review of that outlandish book, by Stephen Spender; he had picked me out by name for a kind word, I can't after so many years remember what, and in a moment the paper was folded and put away. I couldn't meet the Dean's, the Subdean's eyes. My first thought was, what if they'd spent their three pounds apiece—the pricing as flamboyant as the

format—and seen what I'd been up to, those open invitations, as I now well knew, to lewd miscomprehension?

I should have known better; nobody buys books of that exotic sort until time and the market set to work on them. I've never asked, I never will, what some collector would consider a fair price for my copy; it lost its jacket years ago. When a friend told me Tambi had died this summer, I took it out and read the words the girl I was had written with disbelief. One poem I have no re-

collection of whatsoever, and the one I wrote for him, but never showed him, was published in another of the little magazines long after I'd left all that part of my life behind or thought I had, though I know better now. I'm glad he had a daughter, came back to England, had to the last so many friends, is missed and mourned. When I put him—tried to put him—into a novel, I had him say, "Knowing when to end things, that is a great gift, worthy of a poet: even if I have no other, I have that." Of course he had much more.

## Morning Radio

(for John Scotney)

The silence of the ether. . . .  
What can be going on  
In the art-nouveau liner?

Ah, now the measured pips,  
A stealth of strings  
Tickling the fretwork throat,

Woodwinds entering  
Delicately, the clarinet  
Ascending to a lark-like note.

Seven o'clock—  
News-time, and the merciful  
Voice of Tom Crowe

Explains with sorrow  
That the world we know  
Is coming to an end.

Even as he speaks  
We can hear furniture  
Creak and slide on the decks.

But first a brief recital  
Of resonant names—  
Mozart, Schubert, Brahms.

The sun shines,  
And a new day begins  
To the strains of a horn concerto.

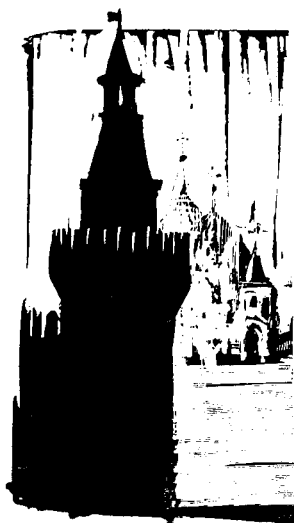
*Derek Mahon*

George Urban

# Portrait of a Dissenter as a Soviet Man

## *A Conversation with Alexander Zinoviev*

### *1. Truth & the "Inside Dopester"*



URBAN: YOU HAVE challenged in your books and lectures virtually all Western interpretations of the Soviet system, offering a variety of arguments to show where they went wrong and why they proved inadequate. Your most spectacular challenge, however, is not to any particular scholarly reading of Soviet society, but to the Western observer's generic (as it were) ability to understand the Soviet system at all. Again and again you insist that, no matter how well a Western scholar may have immersed himself in Soviet history and ideology, no matter how sharp

his wit or fertile his historical imagination, the Soviet system will for ever remain a closed book to him. To understand it and deal with it, you suggest, one has to be "part" of the Soviet system. Only "from inside" will it yield the necessary clues to truthful analysis.

ZINOVIEV: The terms of reference appropriate for the understanding of Western society are inadequate when it comes to analysing other types of society. A scholar using a Western conceptual framework may find it very difficult to make sense of Indian society in the 12th century, or Chinese society 500 years B.C. Soviet society, I contend, is basically different from Western society. Trying to understand it with any chance of success presupposes a specific conceptual framework, fresh mental models, and a new vocabulary. In other words, it postulates an entirely new theory and methodology.

Let me make this clear by giving you some examples. Take the word "party." On the face of it, the Communist Party of the

Soviet Union is a "party." So is the Social Democratic Party in Germany or the Conservative Party in Britain. Yet the two are fundamentally different phenomena. The CPSU is not a "party" in any Western sense of the word. It is not a political phenomenon. It is the motor and overseer of the ruling system. Nor can we say that the Soviet system is a "political" phenomenon.

—Not a political phenomenon?

ZINOVIEV: No. Communist society is not a political phenomenon, because "politics", as that word is understood outside the Soviet Union, does not exist there. Politics, for a simple definition, may be described as a web of contentious relationships between largely independent actors for a slice of power or the whole of state power. The Communist Parties of Western Europe are political parties, at least while they are in opposition. It is also true to say that the relations of the USSR with the outside world are political relations. But once a Communist Party takes power, its political character is dissipated and the party assumes a social character. It restructures the whole of society, eliminating the very notion of any struggle for power or any possibility of independent forces arising (or surviving) to conduct such a struggle.

Now, it is for me axiomatic that for any scientific understanding of social phenomena to be possible you have to place yourself inside the society you are investigating. You have to identify with the conditions obtaining in it and adopt its terms of reference. What is more, you have to go back to its smallest unit and deduce your conclusions from what you have found there. A self-contained feudal estate or a capitalist unit of production is the only true nucleus for understanding feudal or capitalist society. The same goes for the Soviet system. You must understand its basic unit—the autonomous "collective", which may be a working group in a university, a farming community, a school or whatever—before you can say anything useful about the Soviet system. And that, as I say, requires inside knowledge, a new set of conceptual tools, and a new vocabulary.

—*I am a little unhappy about the idea that you have to possess "inside knowledge" in order to understand Soviet reality. It is a claim which has been made in too many bad causes to be acceptable without further explanation. Nazi ideologists claimed that the special spirituality that made the German people ripe for a National-Socialist renewal was inaccessible to the minds of non-Germans. Similar claims were made by the Italian Fascists and a great many other prophets and defenders of the alleged uniqueness of this-or-that social order or "national psyche."*

*Nor does your emphasis on "inside knowledge" quite accord with your claim that you are seeking a strictly scientific understanding of Soviet society. A chemist or physicist who claimed that his theory could only be understood and tested by dark-haired males, 179 centimetres tall, born in the village of Cuckfield in the year 1947 would be given short shrift by his colleagues.*

ZINOVIEV: Your analogies do not stand. Communism is a new type of society, because it has fundamentally changed the character of social relations. Fascism and Nazism did not do that. Those were political régimes of a certain kind, but not new types of societies. It is therefore perfectly possible for, say, a British capitalist scholar to understand the nature of Italian Fascism without any special empathy; but he cannot, as long as he remains an outsider, understand Communist society.

—*But you have said that "political" society requires several independent actors vying with one another for political power. Now, in Hitler's National-Socialist society, or in Italy under Mussolini, there were no such independent actors. The Nazi and to a lesser degree the Fascist Parties were the motors and overseers of everything that went on in the state, exactly as the Communist Party is in the Soviet Union. No opposition was tolerated.*

*Why, then, do you say that Nazism and Fascism were "political régimes" rather than societies comparable in many ways to Soviet Communism? What you appear to be clearly implying is the orthodox Soviet position: that Capitalism, Nazism, and*

*Fascism belong, so to speak, to the same species, whereas Communism does not. The view in the West is, of course, the opposite. Many believe that Communist society, Nazi society, and Fascist society have much more in common with one another, precisely because they are One-Party totalitarian systems, than any of them has with, say, British parliamentary democracy or the French republic.*

ZINOVIEV: Fascism was a "political" phenomenon, even though it was a single-party phenomenon, because it did not involve the structural overhaul of society. It did not lead to a fundamental reorganisation of social relations despite the egalitarian, anti-aristocratic tendencies which were undeniably present in both the German and Italian variety. . . .

—*. . . an old Soviet cliché! (if I may interrupt you for a moment) . . . .*

ZINOVIEV: Every society, whether ancient or modern, can only be understood within its own terms of reference. Our tools of analysis which are appropriate for the comprehension of ancient Egypt are not appropriate for the comprehension of feudal society in, shall we say, France in the 13th century. That is all I am saying.

Soviet society, too, demands a specific approach and a specific language, because it has brought about a qualitative transformation in the whole of society. I base my insistence on the need to understand Soviet society from within on certain post-Kantian and post-Hegelian ideas which stress the importance of identifying with the objects of your observation before comparing them with other phenomena or imposing value-judgments on them.

—*No doubt you are thinking of Dilthey and his notion of "Verstehen". . . .*

ZINOVIEV: Yes, among others. We must first understand from within the basic cell of Soviet society—the autonomous com-

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In 1977, after publication (in Russian) in the West of his celebrated satire "The Yawning Heights", Professor Zinoviev was deprived of all his appointments and expelled from the Communist Party. A decree revoking his Soviet citizenship for "behaviour damaging to Soviet prestige" was signed by President Brezhnev in 1978 while Professor Zinoviev was attending a Philosophy Congress in West Germany. Condemned to permanent exile from the Soviet Union, he now lives in Munich.

AMONG HIS BOOKS published in Russian by L'Age d'Homme in Lausanne are: "Notes of a Nightwatchman", "In the Antechamber of Paradise", "Without Illusions" (all 1979), and "The Yellow House" (1980); two volumes of essays, broadcasts, etc., "We and the West" (1981) and "Neither Freedom nor Equality nor Brotherhood" (1983); a volume of poems, "Home, My Foreign Country" (1982); "Homo Sovieticus" (1982); and "The Flight of our Youth"

(1983), a memoir of his life under Stalin. English translations of "The Yawning Heights" and "The Radiant Future" were published in 1979 and 1981 by Bodley Head (London) and Random House (New York); "The Reality of Communism" was brought out this year by Victor Gollancz in London and Schocken Books, New York, in a translation by Charles Janson.

ONE OF THE earliest discussions of his work to be published in the West—Helen von Ssachno's "News from Nowhere in Ibansk", which reviewed the Russian edition of "The Yawning Heights", appeared in the May 1977 issue of ENCOUNTER. This was followed by her interview with Professor Zinoviev in February 1979; by a "samizdat" review of "The Yawning Heights" by Raisa Lert, who lives in Moscow and was associated with Roy Medvedev's journal, "Twentieth Century"; and by Judy Dempsey's conversation with him in February 1979. An extract from "The Radiant Future" appeared in the April 1981 issue.

GEORGE URBAN'S recent contributions to ENCOUNTER include conversations with Jeane Kirkpatrick (November 1983), Eugene V. Rostow (April 1983), Daniel Bell (February 1983), W. Averell Harriman (November 1981), Zbigniew Brzezinski (May 1981), Leszek Kolakowski (January 1981), and Milovan Djilas (December 1979).

munity, or collective. Having done that, we must try to identify the laws that govern its interaction with other cells. We do, of course, start with those most easily identified and then proceed only gradually to the more complicated ones. The essential rule to remember is that we must not be side-tracked into premature comparisons. We must anchor our thinking in the basic characteristics of the Soviet system as self-contained, immanent phenomena. Having done that, we can at a later stage make historical comparisons with Fascist Italy, or whatever.

*—I take your point. But why do you contend that a competent scholar in France or the USA cannot summon sufficient intellectual or imaginative power to get within the skin of the Soviet system? One of the very best histories of English literature was written by two Frenchmen (Legouis and Cazamian). Is it reasonable to claim that scholars like George Kennan, Merle Fainsod, Leonard Schapiro and Ronald Hingley have shown themselves incapable of making the intellectual-imaginative leap?*

ZINOVIEV: The Soviet system is *sui generis*. It is extremely difficult to understand, even for people who have been born and bred in it. Please bear in mind that the time-lag between physical or social phenomena and the scientific understanding of these phenomena can be unconscionably long. People existed for millions of years without understanding the nature of gravitation. Newtonian mechanics are a very recent discovery, and Einstein's relativity theory is even more recent. Capitalist society had existed for many centuries, but it was only in the 19th century that social science began to decipher the structure and describe the regularities of capitalist society. Communist society is very young indeed. Its whole history spans a mere 66 years. It is, therefore, difficult to take it in from the outside. Moreover, Western scholars approach it with their own educational background, their own values and mental models. All of this makes for distortions and incomprehension.

Consider, by contrast, my own fitness to comprehend Soviet reality. I was born in the Soviet system a few years after the October Revolution. I went to Soviet schools and universities and served in the Red Air Force during the War. I spent 30 years of my life studying Soviet society, designing my own logic and method to make that study profitable. I am probably the only man in the world who has developed his own sociological framework for the comprehension of Soviet society based on the experience of having lived in that society, met people at every rung of the social ladder—for several years I worked in a factory—and watched their mobility horizontally and vertically.

*—And how would you summarise your theory?*

ZINOVIEV: I do not claim that I have produced a complete and testable theory. I have merely laid the foundations of what might, in perhaps two or three centuries, be an overall scientific theory with a descriptive and prescriptive potential. An outline of my theory is given in my book *The Reality of Communism*.

**N**O DOUBT YOU WILL, *nevertheless, want to give me some skeletal indication of your hypothesis as we go along. Let me, in the meantime, underline my unease at hearing you say that in order to comprehend and deal with Soviet society you have to be a part of it. I'm reminded of the absurd criminological argument that no judge who has not himself committed murder has the right to pass sentence on a murderer, because he cannot possibly identify with the psychological predicaments that turn a law-abiding citizen to homicide. A rough and ready analogy, you may well say; but it makes my point.*

ZINOVIEV: Communist society is an empirical fact. Scientific investigation requires that we observe empirical facts for what they are. In Soviet society these can only be experienced from within.

*—You are saying that they are not accessible to Western scholarship . . . that Western scholars cannot, because of the remoteness of their point of observation, write authentically about Soviet society.*

ZINOVIEV: Perhaps they can—but so far they have not done so. Take, for example, the favourite Western reading of Soviet society, which comes direct from Solzhenitsyn—namely that the Soviet people regard the Party and Government as an alien system which they hate and are anxious to overthrow. It just does not correspond to the facts.

*—Is Solzhenitsyn, in your view, entirely wrong in saying what he does . . . and what many Western observers have also been saying quite independently from and well before him?*

ZINOVIEV: Of course he is.

*—What, then, are the real facts, as you see them, about the Soviet people's attitude to the Communist system? Do they support the system as one of their own choosing?*

ZINOVIEV: It is not for me to make political judgments of that sort. Certainly, the system is accepted. My job as a scientist is to describe the system and make sense of it. If you want to find out how the Soviet people really relate to the Party and Government, you have to examine the structure of Soviet society; and that is what I have done.

I describe and analyse the empirical facts as I find them. Take a primary social group, a cell, for your starting point; and let your particular example be a scientific institute. You'll find that this primary group is itself an extremely complicated phenomenon. It'll have a director, assisted by a deputy director, and a group of senior collaborators. The institute will be divided into, let's say, five departments. Each of these will fall into several sub-groups, each with its own leader, staff, Party secretary and other functionaries. Furthermore, you will find that numbers will put certain restrictions on the effectiveness of each group. If your whole staff runs to one hundred, you will probably need ten groups to make the division of work, control, and leadership manageable. If several major groups cooperate for the attainment of some social or productive achievement, you will find that control retreats to

small cabals within each group; and eventually a hierarchy of élites will come into existence, with specific characteristics and laws governing their relationship. These laws are tricky to determine, but they exist.

WHAT YOU ARE IMPLYING, *I think, is that, far from Solzhenitsyn being right, the structure of Soviet society is in reality in substantial harmony with the wishes and mentality of the Soviet people.*

ZINOVIEV: No. It is not a question of people's wishes but of social laws. The structures and correlations I observe do not depend on the human characteristics of the participants. The correlations I establish have the force of natural laws. They apply to every people and to any number of people—everywhere.

—*You mean all Communist societies of the Soviet type?*

ZINOVIEV: Yes, they apply wherever private property has been abolished and both industry and agriculture have been nationalised. Wherever these conditions really obtain, social structures identical with those we find in the USSR will inevitably come into being.

—*A universal law?*

ZINOVIEV: Yes—all laws of Communist society are universal laws, wherever Communism is reality.

—*Are you comfortable with so Stalinoid an assertion?*

ZINOVIEV: I am and have always been an anti-Stalinist. You know that. But I make this statement not as a Stalinist or anti-Stalinist, but as a scientist relying for my conclusions on empirical evidence.

—*Whatever its scientific truth, I'm a little wary of your "universal law", because Stalin's tyranny over East-Central Europe and his claim to the leadership of the world Communist movement were based on the assertion that the Soviet model of Communism was a universal model for Socialist/Communist societies. This entitles us to handle your "law" with a measure of caution.*

ZINOVIEV: The laws of Communism as expressed in Soviet society are universal laws, but their application and the results springing from them may vary. If you compare Communism as it is actually practised in the Ukraine, Georgia, and Russia you will find great differences. Indeed, Georgian Communism is more distant from the Muscovite variety than, shall we say, Polish Communism; and it stands to reason that the differences are explained by climate, national history, and other characteristics peculiar to a nation or a region. But if you disregard the accretions and consider Communist society in its pure, if you like, laboratory condition, the laws of Communism will be seen to be valid at all times and everywhere. This does not invalidate the fact that life for the ordinary man is much better in Georgia

than in Russia, or that a Hungarian is substantially better off in terms of housing, food supplies, culture and so on, than his opposite number in Czechoslovakia. But if you compare the organisation of a factory in Georgia, Czechoslovakia, Hungary and Russia, you will find that they are structurally identical and that the social relations they generate are identical too.

YOU SEEM TO BE STRESSING the importance of an abstraction: that under laboratory conditions Communism would assume identical forms wherever it was applied. To most of us, however, this abstraction is not very important, because we know well enough that, as long as society is made up of human beings (rather than robots or genetically engineered hominids), laboratory conditions will never be obtained. The human element will always intrude—diluting, corrupting, and rendering ridiculous any "pure" form of Communism. Even Mao's abhorrently pure form of social engineering, the "Cultural Revolution", did not escape that fate.

Personally I would put the emphasis on what you have said about Hungary, where food is plentiful, housing is (by Communist standards) in tolerable supply, culture is freer than in any other Communist country, and even some foreign travel is permitted. But these gains are due not, as you suggest, to national characteristics being imposed on Communist social structures (though Magyar know-how and sophistication do play a role)—but to the Hungarians' quiet determination to amend the Soviet book, revise the Soviet "laws", and indeed turn their backs on both without openly saying so. And as my concern, and I take it your concern, is the welfare and happiness of the maximum number of men and women, and not the realisation of an abstract form of seamless Communism, I applaud the Hungarian experiment because it seems to me to be proof that the key to the success of Communism is—the abandonment of Communism.

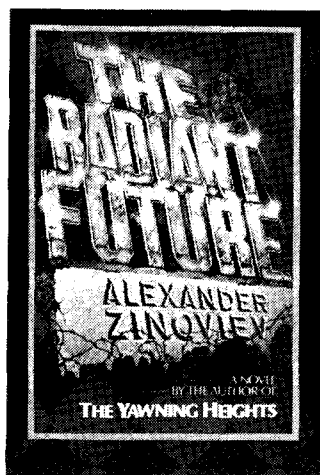
ZINOVIEV: Naturally, if you take human society in the round, you have to take into account and allow for an almost infinite number of complications. But I am not concerned with the legacy of history, with culture or religion. As a logician and sociologist I describe, in abstract form, certain phenomena I have found to exist in Communist society. I describe Communism in its ideal state. I do not dispute that its realisation can be different in different countries. But my business is to construct a model, and for that to be possible I have to proceed step by step. In *The Reality of Communism* I attempt to describe my method.

I contend that any analysis of the Soviet system has to begin with generalisations. I posit certain general laws, and posit them in a language and logical order peculiar to my method. Having established these, I refine them by taking on board empirical evidence, so that I end up by obtaining a more or less complete picture of how Soviet society works—a painstakingly slow procedure.

Now, Western students of the Soviet Union, especially those hostile to the Soviet system, are in a hurry. They are ready with instant analyses and judgments. They variously allege that the Soviet system is "totalitarian" in the sense of Nazi Germany;

that it is “unstable”; that it will fall prey to its inner contradictions, and so on. But these are opinions based on guesswork, incomplete knowledge or straightforward incomprehension. They reflect the needs of journalism and political propaganda. They do not accord with the reality as it appears to the eyes of a competent scholar. Mine is a scientific method which seeks to ferret out facts, not pass value judgments.

## 2. The Very Model of a Model Methodology



ALL THIS RAISES a very large question which we cannot tackle in this conversation: whether social science is a “science”, and whether any scholarship dealing with human beings can be or should be “value-free.” Without stumbling into that particular jungle, let me say that many of your readers will doubtless regard your scientific neutrality towards the Soviet system as a tacit vindication of that system—on the not unreasonable argument that any value-free

investigation of a system which has caused the violent death of millions, and the occupation and suppression of half the European continent, is a typical case of *la trahison des clercs*—and thus, in reality, not value-free at all. One might as well, they would argue, make a “systems-analysis” of the Nazi concentration camps—their social structure, hierarchical organisation, their links with other organs of the National-Socialist system, etc.—without spilling ink on the unpleasant (and “value-heavy”) fact that the camps were there to gas, burn, starve, shoot, hang, and otherwise exterminate human beings.

I respect your insistence on the integrity and neutrality of “science.” Nevertheless your dispassionate approach to a topic so heavy with suffering puts me slightly on my guard. In 1984 can one say “Soviet” without muttering “Gulag” in the same breath?

ZINOVIEV: You are not the first to make this sort of accusation. But your criticism betrays a certain philistinism and is unjustified. The charges against me are usually couched in this form. In my scientific work I describe Soviet society as a normal phenomenon. My critics say (exactly as you have just said) that this implies approval of the Soviet system. But the inference is nonsensical. The concept of “norm” carries no value-judgment. It is totally neutral. It stands for “a standard for measure” . . . .

— . . . it does, in a general sense. But it also stands for “rule for proper conduct” in ethics, and in axiology for “standard for judging value” . . .

ZINOVIEV: But as I have clearly ruled out ethics and axiology from my investigations, we need not waste time on secondary meanings. “Norm” in science is a neutral notion. When I say that Soviet society is a normal phenomenon, all I’m saying is that, *given the nature of Communist society*, Soviet society is a normal society; it is, after 66 years, in perfect harmony with the pure model of Communist society. Would my critics have raised their eyebrows if I had said: “a poison snake with its fangs intact in the South Asian jungle is a normal phenomenon”? Clearly they would not. A poison snake in the streets of London would be an abnormal phenomenon, but not in India. Yet my statement about Soviet society is of the same sort. I discuss all this in more detail in *The Reality of Communism*, so I will explain it no further.

—Does “normal” Communist society, then, require mass violence by the state as a normal condition of its existence?

ZINOVIEV: I am not concerned with the chaotic origins of Soviet society or the peculiarly Russian conditions between the two World Wars which coloured the emergence of Soviet society. I describe the structure of Soviet society as it is—not its accretions.

—If mass violence is an accretion, it is one that matters to ordinary human beings more than any other feature of Soviet society. However this may be, your comments on the alleged ineptitude of Western students of the Soviet Union nettle me. Take one of the most reliable (and respected) studies of the day-to-day workings of Soviet society, Merle Fainsod’s “Smolensk under Soviet Rule.” Here is a painstaking analysis of the Soviet system based on a mass of Soviet documents and written by an American scholar deeply versed in the culture of the Soviet Union and the Russian language. Would you say that Fainsod’s picture of the Soviet system is inadequate or misleading?

ZINOVIEV: Factology is not enough. It is one thing to be versed in facts; it is another to discern social laws. Facts exist in abundance. The task of science is not to collect facts but to interpret them. In Newton’s day everybody knew about apples falling, and everybody knew that there was some force keeping the planets moving about the sun and the moon in motion around the earth. But the force itself was invisible. Newton, however, could see behind these seemingly unrelated facts and showed that it was one and the same force—universal gravitation—that causes them all to happen. In trying to understand Soviet society, too, you have to start with a hypothesis and turn it into a scientific theory with a predictive potential as firm as Newton’s law of mechanics.

Now, I ask you, how do the works of American Sovietologists measure up to these requirements? Can you show me a single Western book that has been able to predict any development in Soviet society—even the most primitive? People in the West who concern themselves with the Soviet Union are not scientists in the proper sense of the word, and therefore understand nothing.

—This is a sweeping statement. I don’t want to argue with you on

*a point where your knowledge is extensive, but I do know that even the most dedicated quantifiers and model-builders among Western social scientists would hesitate to claim that any "law" concerning the behaviour of human beings could have the predictive force of Newton's law of gravitation.*

ZINOVIEV: In principle it can. I am concerned with the pure model of Communist society. The Western interpretations of Soviet reality are based on personal impressions, historical analogies, moral predilections, and other non-scientific factors. I reject these.

**Y**OU HAVE INTIMATED that the Western interpretation of Soviet society as "totalitarian" occupies a prominent place on your blacklist. Yet this is a notion that people like George Kennan, Zbigniew Brzezinski, Carl J. Friedrich, Hannah Arendt, Karl Deutsch (to name but a few) have spent a long time thinking and writing about. And none had any doubt that Soviet society was "totalitarian." Were they all in error?

ZINOVIEV: Error is a strong word. They may not have been in error by their own standards; but I do not accept those standards. My theory leads me to a mathematical model of Communist society. Admittedly it will take hundreds of specially trained researchers to substantiate it over a long period of time, and even when it is completed, the gap between abstract truth and concrete application may well be a large one. Nevertheless, the laws emerging from my theory have the force of the laws of physics. They are objective universal laws.

*—There appears to me to be an interesting contradiction in what you are saying. First you insist that Soviet society can only be understood from within. At the same time you claim that Soviet society is governed by testable universal laws. Doesn't your second claim make nonsense of the first? For what sort of a testable universal law is it that is accessible only to a group of privileged observers—those who, like yourself, have been born and nurtured in the Soviet system?*

ZINOVIEV: I do not say that you have to have any special intuition to unearth the clues to Soviet reality, but I do say that you cannot get a handle on empirical evidence unless you are part and parcel of Soviet society.

*—But isn't the net effect the same? It means that non-Soviet scholars are, by definition, debarred from understanding Soviet society. Would a Western scholar be able to understand it if he adopted your methodology but worked from outside the Soviet system?*

ZINOVIEV: My theory requires that the point of observation must be within Soviet society.

*—Western scholars, then, have to take your theory on trust?*

ZINOVIEV: No, my method is open to them, but whether they use that or some other method, they will have to take, for their

starting point, a disinterested, empirical view of Soviet reality with the eyes of an insider. I have no dogmatic views about this. Experience will tell whether it is or is not possible. So far, I can see no indication that any Western scholar would be inclined to undergo a methodological sea-change. The methods they now use, if indeed they use any, are deplorable. Their judgments are chaotic.

Let me give you one example. Before the Second World War, Hitler's leadership had studied the facts. They understood the strengths and weaknesses of the Soviet Union better than the Soviet leadership itself. The Germans had the most excellent information services and thorough evaluation: they knew everything about Soviet industrial capacity; they knew the number of tanks and guns and aircraft we had and could produce; the nature of our supply system; the state of our railways and roads; the readiness of our units in the Red Army and Air Force; the size of our food reserves, and so on. Yet, when it came to estimating our military potential and our ability to resist, Hitler and his lieutenants made some very fundamental mistakes which cost them the War.

How would you define those mistakes?

ZINOVIEV: Well, they knew facts, but facts, as I said a moment ago, are not enough. They had no method for understanding and correlating the facts they had.

*—Do you mean they failed to allow for certain intangibles such as the "spirit of resistance" of the Russian people when attacked by an aggressor?*

ZINOVIEV: Not at all. They failed to work out a scientific method whereby the facts about Russia's military and industrial potential could be correlated with a host of other factors and integrated in an overall formula. That could have given the Germans a reliable picture of the strengths and weaknesses of the Soviet system. They didn't do it. The Western countries, even Western Intelligence, make the same mistakes in our own time.

## Missing Person

Moscow



The Kremlin's list of Soviet leaders does not include Georgi Malenkov who was party and government leader for one week in March, 1953, and looked as if he would succeed Stalin, but lost overall control of the Communist party in a power struggle with Nikita Khrushchev.

Malenkov was banished to the provinces in 1957, but is now living out his last years as an old-age pensioner in Moscow. He was 82 last month.

Official Soviet leaders since the 1917 Bolshevik Revolution have been:

VLADIMIR ILYICH LENIN (1917–1924)  
JOSEF STALIN (1924–1953)  
NIKITA KHRUSHCHEV (1953–1964)  
LEONID BREZHNEV (1964–1982)  
YURI ANDROPOV (1982–1984)

REUTER

Soon after my expulsion from the Soviet Union, three Western gentlemen came to see me. "Zinoviev", they said, "we have read your books and articles, and we admire your insights. We want you to give us your formula for the destruction of the Soviet system."

Well, I told them: "I don't object to being used by you. Anybody and everybody can use me. I'm politically indifferent. I could work for the Soviet authorities, and I could equally work for you. I'm a scientist, a university professor. I have spent thirty years investigating Soviet society; I have obtained results. My sole ambition is that these results should be known in the world as 'Zinoviev results' and my theory as 'Zinoviev's theory of the Soviet system.' You can use my theory in any way you like but, believe me, I don't want to destroy the Soviet system any more than I do the West. Now, if you want to know my theory, give me ten or fifteen gifted students. Arrange for them to spend three years under my guidance and make it possible that, in due course, these students can pass on their knowledge to further groups of young scholars. One of these will eventually work out a computer-model of the Soviet citizen and perhaps even of Soviet society."

None of this pleased my three interlocutors. "How long will all this take?", they asked. "About five years", I replied. This was far too long for them. They were in a hurry. They wanted me to produce a magic formula—at once. So they packed their bags and left. They failed to understand, as the Nazis had failed to understand before them, that obtaining a reliable formula requires a long, painstaking, scientific effort.

**T**HIS IS A REMARKABLE STORY. Your "scientific" neutralism is in line with the thinking of the wartime German missile-experts. Some of them chose to go to the USA to continue their work, while others went to the Soviet Union to do the same. That the Soviet Union was as unfree a society as Hitler's had been did not bother them. Their sole interest was to construct bigger and better missiles.

But, to return to the Nazis' faulty assessment of the Soviet Union, Hitler was not alone in underestimating Soviet staying-power. In Britain and the USA, too, there were fears (many of them openly expressed) that the Soviet Union would prove no match for Hitler's superbly equipped and led forces. Nor were these fears unreasonable, seeing that the mighty USSR could barely, and then only at enormous cost, impose its will on tiny Finland in the 1939–40 Winter Campaign. But when Stalin eventually turned the tables on Germany, his successes were ascribed to Russian patriotism, his personal leadership, and US and British war supplies. Nobody, except Western Communists and other admirers of the Soviet system, said that Hitler or the West had underestimated the strength of Soviet society.

ZINOVIEV: Patriotism cuts both ways—it can carry a negative or positive charge. By the same token, the size of the Soviet war machine could have assumed negative as well as positive roles. Everything depends on a large number of non-military variables which flow from the nature of the Soviet system and are

not easily understood and quantified. Hitler had no formula for their incorporation in his assessments of Soviet power. That is why he miscalculated. Today, Western Sovietologists make the same mistakes. Lacking an adequate method, they are incapable of forming a reliable estimate of the USSR's overall military potential.

BUT LET US, PLEASE, stay with my example for a moment. Western historians say that the USSR won the War for three main reasons. First, Hitler alienated a friendly Russian and Ukrainian population. When the German troops arrived in the Ukraine (so runs the argument) they were greeted as liberators. It was the general beastliness of Nazi policies towards the Slavs, and the particular brutality of the German occupation authorities on Soviet territory, that eventually stiffened Soviet resistance. Would you accept that?

ZINOVIEV: No, this factor played no role at all.

—The second factor is said to have been Stalin's appeal to Russian patriotism and nationalism; his enlistment of the spiritual power of the Orthodox Church; his evocations of Russia's great military feats in the past and the restoration of military ranks and insignia.

And the third factor is said to have been the massive contribution which the USA and Britain made to the Soviet war effort in the form of trucks, tanks, guns, aircraft, raw materials and other supplies.

Would you allow that these factors played a part?

ZINOVIEV: No—all these explanations are extremely wide of the mark to the extent that they are not nonsensical. The historical process during the War was extremely complicated. Hitler made mistakes, Stalin made mistakes, Roosevelt made mistakes, and Churchill made mistakes. But, confining ourselves to the Soviet-German war, the mistakes made by those two sides broadly speaking cancelled out each other. What mattered (to repeat) was Hitler's misreading of the character and overall potential of the Soviet system. The tragedy is that Western observers and Western governments are now repeating Hitler's errors.

Recently I was invited to attend a conference on the nature of Soviet power. One of my co-participants was a distinguished Western military specialist. He knew every Soviet general's name in the higher echelons of the armed forces. He knew their functions, their departmental jealousies, the equipment of the various Red Army units, their peace-time and mobilisation strengths—he knew everything. The only thing he could not compute out of all this impressive information was the one thing that mattered: the overall power of the Soviet Union.

I assured him that if he lived in the Soviet Union he would find that most Soviet scholars were unable to name the members of the *Politburo*, much less the Central Committee. Yet they'd have a very precise idea of what the system was about. Why? Because they would understand that individuals did not matter in the Soviet system. What matters is the system itself, and that can be understood only through scientific study.

Western Sovietologists have written volumes about the question of succession in the Soviet leadership. Yet, in the months preceding Khrushchev's dismissal they were unable to detect the slightest tremor in the Soviet landscape. Nor could they tell us anything useful about Brezhnev's succession. They widely tipped Chernenko as the most likely successor. The hallmark of science is its ability to predict. Western Sovietology is the work of charlatans.

—Have you been able to predict the behaviour of the Soviet system?

ZINOVIEV: Yes, I have. I cannot make mathematically precise predictions, but I can predict certain tendencies.

—For example?

ZINOVIEV: Let us suppose that the NATO countries or the USA alone occupy Iran or intervene in certain African countries. I can, by using my mathematical model of the Soviet Union as a

world power, forecast the kind of countermeasures the Kremlin will take, such as moving into Pakistan, activating the Soviet-Syrian treaty, stepping up the pressure on South Africa, and so on.

**M**AY I SAY THAT SYSTEMS-ANALYSTS have a wonderful way of predicting the obvious. "How will the US Federal Government allocate certain funds set aside for welfare programmes in disadvantaged areas?"—this was the subject of an expensive team-research project in my time at the University of Southern California. Two years and several hundred thousand dollars later, the research team came up with the astounding forecast that the Federal Government would build schools in black neighbourhoods where schools were in short supply, and hospitals in areas where medical care was insufficient! When the Federal Government did, eventually, announce its plan to build schools and hospitals where these were most needed, my systems-analyst colleagues had a knowing smile on their faces: "We told you so. . . ."

Your forecast strikes me as being of the same sort. Any junior foreign-service officer in Britain or France failing to forecast the

## Tweedledum, Tweedledee, & Cleopatra's Nose



**T**HE succession of Konstantin Chernenko to Mr Andropov put paid to the speculations about the possible prospects of any significant internal reform. Chernenko, the protégé of Brezhnev, is similarly disinclined to tinker with the Soviet system.

In his role as spokesman on ideology Chernenko expressed his basic attitude to the problem of economic reform in a speech (at the June 1983 Party plenum) in which he stressed that:

"there exist truths which are not subject to revision, problems that were solved long ago and without further ramifications. . . ."

His zeal included even music as a target of his censure, castigating "musical ensembles whose repertoires are of a dubious nature" causing "ideological and aesthetic harm" to the Soviet people.

This does not leave much room for the hopes so widely expressed in the Western Press on Andropov's assumption of power about the latter's "liberalism" and "sophistication" as allegedly manifested in

the devotion to English whisky and all that Western jazz. . . .

Mr Chernenko is going to cling to his familiar ways, even though he might make some cosmetic economic changes in the face of the same intractable problems which confronted his predecessor (low productivity, falling rate of growth, agricultural backwardness, inefficient system of incentives due to the absence of market mechanisms, corruption and social immobility).

THE SIMPLE CONTRAST between Soviet "conservatives" and "reformers", just like the contrast between "hawks" and "doves" so beloved by Western commentators, is of course quite misleading.

There are no "liberals", "reformers" or "doves" in the present Politburo. The fact that Chernenko was chosen does not indicate that either Romanov or Gorbachev would have been inclined to challenge the Party apparatus of which Chernenko is a spokesman. Nor has Mr Chernenko any chance in his Brezhnevian comeback to stop the generational change in the Soviet élite.

THE GENERAL INCLINATION in the West is to see a silver lining on the occasion of each and every Soviet succession, hoping for a change in the basic Soviet policy. Hope springs eternal in Western breasts at the funeral of each successive Soviet leader, in spite of the lessons of the 66 years of Soviet history which testify to the continuity of Soviet foreign policy.

The nomination of Chernenko may perhaps slightly dampen such euphoric hopes, which were invariably expressed on such

occasions. Stalin was considered a "moderate" in contrast to the "flaming revolutionary" Trotsky; Malenkov and Beria were presented as "liberals." Khrushchev was supposed to be compelled to turn inwards because of "de-Stalinisation." Brezhnev was "pragmatic", promoting "détente" (until Afghanistan and Poland), Andropov was a "closet liberal" (in spite of his role in Hungary in 1956 and his mental prisons for Soviet dissidents). Now it is the turn of Chernenko: one can already hear the usual chorus of Western commentators discovering the hitherto unknown liberal virtues of the "new" man.

IN THE PAST the record of Kremlinologists was not very impressive: no one thought of Stalin as a successor to Lenin, or of Khrushchev as a successor to Stalin. The ousting of Khrushchev in 1964 was predicted only in the astrological yearbook, "Old Moore's Almanac." With Andropov and Chernenko the forecasting record is a bit better, but the political significance of it is less exciting.

IN THE administrative greyness of Soviet officialdom the victory of a bureaucratic Tweedledum over a bureaucratic Tweedledee is now less significant than in the past.

All the present Soviet Cleopatras have, so to say, very similar noses.

**Leopold Labeledz**

Editor, Survey Magazine  
in the DAILY TELEGRAPH (London)

*kind of Soviet moves you have predicted would have his chances of promotion seriously jeopardised.*

ZINOVIEV: You make it sound all too simple. Building a mathematical model is a highly skilled and complicated business. I could teach you my method if we had a couple of years at our disposal—

*—Are you implying that I'd be a slow or a fast learner?*

ZINOVIEV: At two years you'd have to be a fast one.

*—Could we, on the strength of your method, for example, understand French society before the French Revolution—or after?*

ZINOVIEV: You could use my scientific method for devising a theory about French society. But my own theory does not apply to French society. It applies to Communist society only.

*—Will it, then, explain Chinese Communist society?*

ZINOVIEV: No, it will not. Chinese society is not a purely Communist society. Soviet society is the classical pattern. Some of my theorems will, of course, cover China, Hungary, Romania and the other East European countries, but in general my theory applies to Soviet society only.

*—But would you not agree that ten years of the Maoist Cultural Revolution brought China closer to the egalitarian Communist model than anything that has happened in the Soviet Union in its 66 years of history?*

ZINOVIEV: I don't know Chinese society, so I will not talk about it. But there is yet another reason why my theory cannot be applied to China. According to my theory, every social system has limitations of scale. If the size of a system outstrips those limitations, two things can happen: it will either develop its own sub-systems of viable size and thus survive; or it will not, in which case it will destroy itself. I can prove with the certainty of a mathematical theorem that China cannot become an effective world power precisely because it has too large a population. A society of 1,000 million people is too unmanageable and unwieldy.

*—What would you say is the optimal size for a society to be effective?*

ZINOVIEV: About 200 million is enough. China could become a great state if it killed off at least half its population. There are certain hard, testable mathematical correlations which give us the upper (and lower) limits of an effective society. There are, of course, many other mathematical correlations too, which I could teach you if you chose to become my student for a while. For example the calculus of the system's decision-making ability, of its stability, the parameters of risk-taking by the leadership, and so on. Unfortunately, some weaknesses remain in my theory so that I cannot adequately explain everything I'd like to explain.

*—Did you predict the Soviet move into Afghanistan on the strength of your computations?*

ZINOVIEV: Yes, I did, in a talk to the American Club in Munich.

*—Why was the world not alerted to your prediction?*

ZINOVIEV: That I cannot tell you.

WHAT YOU HAVE, THEN, GIVEN US is a theory that is (1) essentially accessible to Soviet residents only; (2) specific to the Soviet type of Communist society; and (3) specific to the size of Communist society that happens to be the size of existing Soviet society. All this puts me on my guard—especially as your claim to be “scientific” has an old ring of 19th-century scientism about it.

You have, as a Soviet man, observed Soviet society with enormous empathy—and wit—for 30 odd years, and written about it in great detail with mordant humour and great sophistication. I would have thought that was your great contribution to the debate about Soviet society—not some mathematical model specific to the Soviet Union, to Soviet men, and in the last analysis, perhaps only to one Soviet man: yourself.

ZINOVIEV: You are absolutely wrong there. Mine is a rigorous theory based on first-hand experience; and I feel I have the right to speak in terms of my theory because it concerns the life and death of mankind. The Soviet Union has become a very serious enemy of the Western world and we have to spend time, energy, and money to perfect our understanding of that enemy. It may well be that the uses of my theory will be limited to one single occasion. That would not upset me in the slightest.

The Soviet Union resembles in most of its features a mechanical system. Most facts about Soviet society can be counted and fed into a computer. When the danger of war arises, we are, on the strength of my theory, in the fortunate position of being able to “take the measure” of the Soviet system in the literal sense. Suppose the next war were to be a nuclear war: it is of fundamental importance for us to know whether the Soviet or the Western system has the greater capacity for survival.

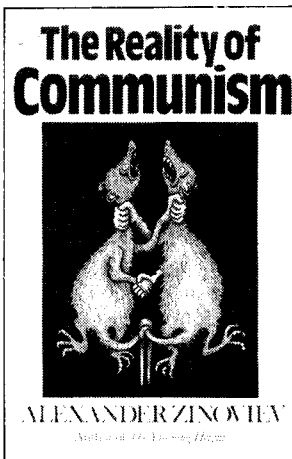
*—And you can tell us which. . . .*

ZINOVIEV: It can be done. Oh yes, it can. Our contemporary computers are not equal to the task, but as soon as we have one that can digest several hundred variables—it will be done.

*—How do you quantify morale, dedication, the force of nationalism?*

ZINOVIEV: It is difficult, but it can be done.

### 3. Of Russian Pride & Ethnic Prejudice



TAKE A PRACTICAL example. General Sir John Hackett, in his well-known book "*The Third World War*", predicts that, after a limited nuclear exchange and a stalemated conventional war in Central Europe, the Soviet Union will break up into its constituent parts under the impact of national separatism. Now, how would you quantify the Ukrainian, or Lithuanian, or Uzbek wish for national independence?

ZINOVIEV: This is a ridiculous scenario. General Hackett wants the Soviet Union to disintegrate, and he predicts events in accordance with his own wish.

—Are you saying that the spirit of national independence does not exist in the non-Russian parts of the USSR?

ZINOVIEV: Yes, I am.

—That it does not exist at all?

ZINOVIEV: It exists, but it is too weak to matter. You have to see things as they really are. With the sole exception of the small Baltic republics, which (especially Estonia and Latvia) are in fact German by tradition and culture, the other non-Russian nations and nationalities are net *beneficiaries* of the Russian connection. Offer an ordinary Ukrainian or Azerbaidzhani the possibility of secession from the Soviet Union—he will refuse it! You will, of course, always find tiny minorities of nationalists and dissidents who think otherwise, but the vast majority will have nothing to do with national independence. It would cost them too dear.

—You sound like a Habsburg defender of the status quo in, shall we say, 1914.

ZINOVIEV: Not at all. I speak of a status quo which is genuinely accepted. Take the Azerbaidzhani. Many of them live in Moscow and Leningrad, holding down privileged positions, occupying sumptuous homes, sending their children to privileged schools, and so on. They "live off the land" of the Russians. For them Russia is a colony.

—Is the Russification of the non-Russian republics, of which so much has been written, also a myth in your view?

ZINOVIEV: Absolutely. The non-Russian republics have not been "Russified" in the old imperial sense of the word. On the contrary: one of the most significant features of the October Revolution was the colonisation of *Russia* and the Russian nation. The Bolsheviks were afraid of the submerged masses of the Russian people. They found it more convenient to uproot

groups of Ukrainians, Tatars, Georgians, and so on, and base their rule on these much more manipulable *déraciné* minorities. Even today when this anti-Russian trend is being reversed, in Moscow, Leningrad, and the other major Russian cities you will find that at least half the senior élite in the Party, Government, and public administration are not Russians. If you look at the list of Soviet writers, generals, or academicians rather few of the names will be Russian. The rest will be typical names of Ukrainians and so on.

Until not so many years ago the Russian people were the underdogs of the Soviet empire, as indeed they had been underdogs under the Czars too. They were peasants bound to the villages, tilling the land, supplying the armed forces with cannon-fodder and, generally speaking, performing the lowly, menial tasks at servitors' rates. The result is that the great majority of people running our country and setting the tone of its culture—whether in literature, music, jurisprudence or science—come from non-Russian ethnic stock. After the Revolution some three million of the Russian intelligentsia were slaughtered. Then, with the 1928–32 Collectivisation campaign, about 15 million Russian peasants—the basic stock of our nation—perished. It is only now that the Russian people are being slowly emancipated and allowed to compete for the more influential posts. But, until quite recently, the Governments of Russia were not *Russian* Governments. There have, in fact, been no Russian Governments in Russia (or the Soviet Union) since Peter the Great. Our Czars since Peter were, to say the very least, Germanised by marriage.

It is, then, safe to conclude that every minority nation or nationality has been enjoying a privileged position in comparison with the Russian people—that they have regarded Russia as their colony. For example, every nation and nationality has its Academy of Sciences. There is no Russian Academy of Sciences.

—This is true of the Communist Party too. All Republics have their own Communist Parties, but there is no Russian Communist Party.

ZINOVIEV: Yes, perfectly true.

—But then knowledgeable scholars like Leonard Schapiro have argued that this is because the dominant organisation, the Communist Party of the Soviet Union, is in fact the **Russian Communist Party**.

ZINOVIEV: This is quite untrue. The CPSU has never been a Russian phenomenon.

Today in the Soviet Academy of Sciences only about 10% of the Academicians are Russian, whereas Russians make up half the total Soviet population. The same goes for the Central Committee, the KGB, the Army, and so on. Right through the Soviet élite, the Russian people is badly under-represented. So is its culture in the Soviet Union as a whole.

THIS CERTAINLY RUNS COUNTER to almost all the written and spoken evidence I have seen on the subject. For ten years under Brezhnev all members of the Secretariat of the

Central Committee were Russian, even though Russians account for only about 60% of the Party's membership. Volumes have been written about the Russification of the Central Asian Republics, the Baltic States, the Ukraine. I will not review the evidence, for it is too well known. Would you say it is **all** nonsensical?

ZINOVIEV: Indeed I would, and I do. These republics have not been "Russified" in any meaningful sense of the word.

—*Is the reverse, then, the case?*

ZINOVIEV: Yes, it is. If you go to the Soviet Union with certain *a priori* conceptions in mind, you will always find evidence to endorse them.

—*But isn't it also true that if you come from the Soviet system with a certain mathematical model in mind, you will always find facts to endorse that?*

ZINOVIEV: If your *a priori* conception is that national conflicts will destroy the Soviet system, you will come back with a thick file of "evidence" showing that those conflicts actually exist. Some Western scholars believe that alcoholism will be the death of the Soviet Union. One nonsense is as good as another.

—*But you will surely allow that linguistic Russification exists?*

ZINOVIEV: Absolutely not. All Soviet citizens are indeed taught Russian. But this cannot be called "Russification." You may have been misled by a recent demonstration in Georgia which is now widely quoted as showing that there is widespread resentment among Georgians of the Russian language and of the Russian people. But this is not true. It is now established that only some of those demonstrators had any command of the Georgian language. All Georgians, however, speak Russian—and so they should, in their own interest. For when a Georgian goes to Moscow to sell his produce, or speculate on the black market, or publish his book, he needs Russian, not Georgian. Georgia is a small republic. Russian is the *lingua franca* of the Soviet Union.

—*As you seem to be speaking with the authentic voice of imperialism, let me point out that in British India too—where the English language was genuinely accepted both as lingua franca among Indian tribes and nationalities, and as a passport to education, professional advancement, and business success—it was widely argued by the British that good public administration and India's own economic interests were better served within the British Empire than they would be outside it. Yet, when the chips were down, the British-educated Indian intelligentsia preferred Independence to economic advantage and good administration, and caused the British to leave.*

*What I am saying is that no matter how persuasive the economic or cultural self-interests of your Georgians may be, you cannot expect them not to want to assert their national independence just because, on sober calculation, they might be economically better off under Russian rule, going to Russian schools, etc., than they would be under their own. Nations do*

*not act so rationally—as we well know from the disintegration of the colonial empires after the War.*

ZINOVIEV: But your assertions about Russification are absurd. The Russian language is generally accepted in the Soviet Union—

—*So was (and is) English in India. . . .*

ZINOVIEV: —but the adoption of Russian is not Russification. I can confidently assert that the opposite is closer to the mark. Take the Ukraine, which I know well (I was a frequent visitor there as an examiner of doctoral candidates). All educated Ukrainians speak Russian; they also speak Ukrainian. Russians have not colonised the Ukraine. Indeed, it is virtually impossible for a Russian to get a job in the Ukraine, whereas in Russia about 60% of leading posts are held by Ukrainians. There was a time when 70% of Soviet academicians were Jews, whereas Jews account for only about 1% of the Soviet population. When I was suggested for election to the Academy as a Russian, the Academy's official line was that in principle more Russians should now be admitted. I was closely questioned by an interview board as to whether I was a Jew or a Russian. I am, as you know, a Russian, but despite the Academy's official line, a Jew was elected. And I'm inclined to ascribe this to what I have already told you: the Soviet leaders are at heart afraid of the Russian people. They are more at home with uprooted minorities.

**H**OW, THEN, DO YOU EXPLAIN *Stalin's Great-Russian chauvinism which earned him Lenin's memorable warning in 1922? Lenin feared, you will remember, that the Constitution of the Union would not protect the non-Russians "from invasion of their rights by this typical Russian man, the chauvinist, whose basic nature is that of a scoundrel and repressor, the classical type of Russian bureaucrat. . . ."*

ZINOVIEV: In the first place, Stalin was neither Russian nor did he become "a typical Russian man." Secondly, Lenin was a sick man at the time and uttered much that was nonsensical. In any case, his warning had a specific meaning in the context of the early 1920s which it does not have for us. It is useless to compare like with unlike.

—*What about Stalin's famous tribute, at a victory celebration on 24 May 1945, to the "Russian people" without whose endurance the USSR might have lost the war?*

ZINOVIEV: Yes, Stalin proposed that memorable toast. It was a typical instance of his inspired ideological opportunism. It was a memorable occasion for me, too, because it prompted me to write a satirical poem (now reprinted in my book *The Radiant Future*) which got me into prison. But whatever Stalin said in praise of the Russian people in 1945, it was not long before the repression of the Russian nation was resumed. Once again, the camps were filled with Russian officers, soldiers, intellectuals, and colonial status was clamped down on the Russian people.

There is a tendency, too, in the Soviet Union for the small nations and minority groups to spread the word around that they are being hard done by—that there is “prejudice” against them because they are Georgians, or Azerbaïdzhanis, or Jews. But this is a myth. Let me tell you a story.

Two Soviet Jews meet in a street in Moscow. “Well, how’s life treating you?”, the first asks his friend.

“N-n-n-not . . . t-t-too . . . w-w-well”, says the second with a heavy stutter.

“But why? What’s happened?”

“I . . . I . . . I’ve . . . app-app-applied . . . f-f-for a j-j-job . . . as TV ann-ann-announ-announcer on Sov-Sov-Soviet TV and . . . I . . . I . . . I’ve b-b-been . . . re-re-refused be-be-be-because I . . . am . . . a-a-a . . . J-J-Jew.”

—*Are you saying that all prejudice and all anti-Semitism is of this imaginary character?*

ZINOVIEV: No. The Soviet Union is a very large country. Here and there spots of prejudice exist—against Muslims, Armenians, Jews, what-have-you, but anti-Jewism (which we should keep separate from anti-Semitism) is largely a phenomenon of the last two or three decades and has grown parallel with the slow but increasing emancipation of the Russian people. As their ability to compete for jobs has grown, so has the feeling that the Jewish grip on the more worthwhile types of employment is out of proportion with the number of Soviet Jews. Before the Second World War, Jews were privileged people in our country, and they are in some respects still privileged people today: they can emigrate if they want to badly enough, whereas a Russian or Tadzhik cannot.

**S**URELY I DON’T HAVE TO REMIND you of the history of Russian pogroms; Stalin’s anti-Semitism; the “Doctors’ Plot”; the real thrust of the “Anti-Zionist” campaigns, the penalties of Jewish emigration, and the discrimination and personal animus the ordinary Soviet Jew has to pocket from the ordinary Russian or Ukrainian every day of his life. The mere fact that his internal passport classifies him as a Jew by “nationality” tells much of the story.

ZINOVIEV: The Russian people have never been anti-Semitic. In fact, in many ways they always preferred Jewish people to their own kind. Whenever Russians had a chance to elect a man as a leader of some group or director of some enterprise and had a choice between a Russian and a Jew, they would elect a Jew. This was an old Russian tradition, the reason being that the Russian people were not much inclined to rule. The Jews were, and they were very good at it because they were competent, had will-power and brains. Since the Second World War the emancipation of Russians has advanced apace, and the predominance of Jews has come to be resented. Hence the talk about Russian anti-Semitism. But, as I say, before the War virtually all the professorial chairs in Moscow, Leningrad, and the major provincial cities were held by Jewish scholars, and the Academy too was an almost exclusively Jewish preserve. In those days, however, the number of worthwhile academic

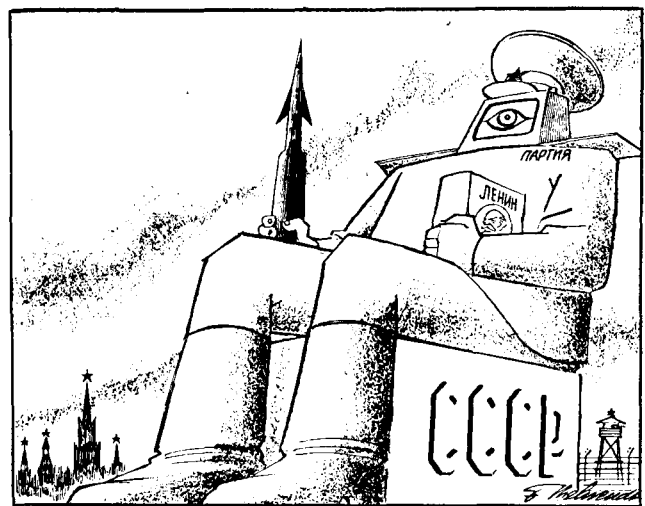
appointments ran to no more than a few dozen, whereas today these and the parallel posts in industrial research and development are counted in their tens of thousand. There just aren’t enough qualified Jews to compete with 100 million Russians.

—*Do you, then, clearly ascribe anti-Semitism to this growing competition for well-endowed appointments and prestige?*

ZINOVIEV: No. This is not only a Jewish question. The “Mafias” come into it, for the Russian people are faced with a number of what one might call “mafias” which they naturally dislike. The Armenians have a mafia-like group-loyalty wherever they may live; so have the Tatars; so have the Georgians; and so have the Jews. The October Revolution in a sense legitimised these with its emphasis on the equality of all peoples and cultures. The only nation which was not allowed to proclaim its special cohesion and individuality was the Russian people. As soon as the Russian nation tried to speak with its own distinctive voice, up went the cry of “nationalism”, “chauvinism”, even “fascism.” Part of today’s anti-Semitism in the Soviet Union is due to the mafia-like character of the special cohesion and transnational ties of the Soviet Jews. They, like the Armenians and other minority nationalities, enjoy special privileges which are denied to Russians. This breeds anti-Jewish feeling, which I personally abominate.

—*Would you say that the US emphasis on Jewish emigration as an element of American economic policy has helped or harmed Soviet Jewry?*

ZINOVIEV: It has added to anti-Semitism and, one must say, made things more difficult for that great majority of Jews who cannot, or do not want to, emigrate. If the Americans, and American Jewish interests, supported the claims of dissident Tatars, Armenians, Ukrainians and Russians with a fraction of the urgency with which they have supported Jewish emigration, the situation of Soviet Jews might be very different.



*Functionaries come and go, but the Apparatus remains. . . .*

**D**O YOU THINK THE Soviet leaders would quietly allow Soviet Jews to leave if no American pressure were applied? Wouldn't they be losing a convenient domestic psychological scapegoat as well as a useful bargaining counter vis-à-vis the USA?

ZINOVIEV: I cannot confidently answer that question. What I can say is that our Jews should be allowed to emigrate if they want to, if only because the great usefulness of Soviet Jews as carriers of learning, culture, and expertise is now exhausted. The Soviet Union has enough doctors, scientists, and teachers to be able to do without the specifically Jewish contribution. But if emigration were not to prove possible, perhaps our Jews ought to be given a chance to relocate themselves more evenly throughout the Soviet Union and cease to form compact minorities. This would perhaps ameliorate the odious phenomenon of anti-Semitism.

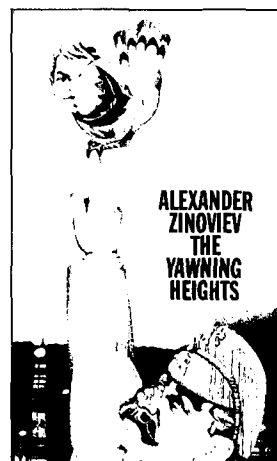
—“Full assimilation” . . . despite the German experience?

ZINOVIEV: That is a difficult subject on which I'm not competent to talk. Suffice it to say that, in the Soviet Union, the importance of national exclusiveness is happily on the decline. I call myself a Russian, and I am—as you have noticed—deeply concerned with the well-being and culture of the Russian people, because it has been for centuries a badly underprivileged people. But at the same time I am equally conscious that I have, as a “Russian”, not a drop of Slavic blood in my veins. So I cannot be a Russian racist. My ancestors came to Russia from Sweden and Finland, adopted Russian as their language, and were Christianised as “Russians.” I do not, therefore, hold that the perpetuation of nationally or racially pure groups, whether Jewish or Swedish or whatever, is a great moral imperative, or for that matter historically possible or desirable. Many of our Jews regard themselves as more Russian than the Russians. I have no quarrel with that sentiment.

—One of Marx's more spectacular failures was the failure to foresee the significance of race and nationalism. Aren't you committing, as one nurtured on Marxism, the same “ethnic” error? Aren't you, in fact, contradicting yourself, arguing as you are for the emancipation of the Russian nation while at the same time downplaying the importance of national homogeneity?

ZINOVIEV: No. There is no contradiction. I do not seek national homogeneity. My preoccupation with the future of the Russian nation is a profound concern for the welfare and culture of the Russian people as human beings who entered the 20th century with a specific background and history. It is not racial. Think of that perhaps greatest of names in Russian literature, Pushkin, who came on his maternal side from Abyssinian stock and was so dark-skinned that he could be taken for an African. Or think of Dostoevsky, with his Polish ancestry. There are no pure races today in the civilised world—nor, I would suggest, should there be any. My suggestion, therefore, that our own Jewish population, having brilliantly performed its cultural mission, may now usefully dilute its identity by voluntary emigration and assimilation is no more anti-Semitic than my concern for a racially mixed Russian nation is anti-Russian.

## 4. Confessions of a Child of the Revolution



**A**LL IN ALL—to return to our main theme—you regard the Russian people as the victims rather than the beneficiaries of the Soviet system?

ZINOVIEV: Not in every respect, and not throughout the régime's 66 years of history. Before the Revolution 80%, if not 90%, of the Russian population were peasants living at subsistence level at the bottom of the social pyramid. They lived miserable lives, only an iota above the level of serfs. The Revolution did produce changes. Take my own family, who were peasants. As a result of the collectivisation of agriculture my parents lost everything they had. But my elder brother eventually rose to be a factory manager; the next one to him in age made it to the rank of colonel; three of my other brothers qualified as engineers; and I became a professor at Moscow University. At the same time millions of Russian peasants were given a formal education and some became professional men and women.

—But surely you moved to these positions over the dead bodies of those many millions of peasants who had been systematically starved in the 1929–32 period?

ZINOVIEV: Yes, if you want to put it that way. I would simply say that the collectivisation of agriculture created many new opportunities. The whole life of the country was radically changed.

—But that is not very different from saying that the gassing of Jews and gypsies in Auschwitz was a radical piece of social engineering which “created many new opportunities”. . .

ZINOVIEV: The collectivisation of agriculture was an essential phase of the Bolshevik Revolution. Without it our country would have disintegrated. The Russian revolution began in 1861 and climaxed in 1917. It happened; and its only possible aftermath was collectivisation.

—So even now, speaking as a dissident on West European soil, you approve of the collectivisation with its fifteen million victims?

ZINOVIEV: Of course I do. I approve of it completely.

—Despite the awesome sacrifices?

ZINOVIEV: Despite the sacrifices. Collectivisation gave industry many millions of workers. And industry meant opportunity.

—Is “gave” the right verb, I wonder? Weren't they being starved into leaving their villages or made to do so by brute force?

ZINOVIEV: They were not “forced” to go into industry. Of course, the kulaks were liquidated. But it was quite possible for ordinary peasants to stay on the land. Life in the big cities, however, offered irresistible temptations. Country life was primitive and boring. My family lived on the land. We had a large and comfortable house. In Moscow the ten of us had to make do with a single room of ten square metres—one square metre per head. Can you imagine?! Yet, we *preferred* life in Moscow.

—*But surely, if your parents' land had not been taken away from them they would not have left your village. Their move was a response to an act of arbitrary expropriation.*

ZINOVIEV: I don't know. It was certainly not any lack of food that made them leave. They moved because better opportunities beckoned in Moscow. Historians now tell us that the exodus from the villages was due to starvation and other pressures. Some may have left for those reasons, but the majority left in search of a better life—a collective life within Soviet institutions.

—*But collective life, if that is what they were after, could be had on the land too. Some of us in the West have been under the impression that it was collective life they were running away from.*

ZINOVIEV: Ah, but at that time collective life had not been properly organised in the countryside. Now it is—but in the 1920s and early 1930s agricultural collectivisation was a halfway house between the old system and the new. But, quite apart from that, in the towns people could visit libraries, go to cinemas, learn languages, meet one another. There was variety, entertainment, and culture to be had—and better wages. Don't forget that the Revolution was a great cultural revolution too. The enormous tragedies you have mentioned were accompanied by improved life-chances.

—*All in all, you seem to be approving of Lenin's dictum that a generation had to be sacrificed. . . .*

ZINOVIEV: I don't approve or disapprove. I take a scientific position which is neutral. What happened, happened. My job is to deal with consequential reality as it is now, not to pass judgment.

—*But you are passing judgment, for when you say that the Soviet system would have disintegrated if collectivisation had not been set in train, you are in fact upholding “the Soviet system” as worth saving even at the cost of fifteen million lives.*

**Z**INOVIEV: Every bit of progress exacts a price and carries certain consequences. Some of these are positive, others negative. I was, as you know, an anti-Stalinist. I was arrested and imprisoned under Stalin because of my opposition to Stalin. Yet, as a scientist I can, and do, make a point of explaining why the Russian people supported Stalin. I was an

anti-Stalinist; yet I must tell you that it was in Stalin's prison that I had a bed of my own for the first time in my life, three meals a day, and decent clothing. Before that I was permanently hungry. After my release I was hungry again.

Think of the dreadful paradox: an anti-Stalinist who must nevertheless insist that Stalin's time was a great epoch in human history! And I was not alone in feeling that. My mother, who hated Stalin and all his works, kept a picture of Stalin in her Bible right up to her death. Millions of Russians did likewise.

—*A hangover from Czarist times . . . Stalin replacing The-Little-Father-of-all-Russians?*

ZINOVIEV: I don't know about that. Stalin represented the dynamism of life. He stood for the ordinary people's power. When he died, the people's power died with him. Without the Revolution my own family would have stayed stuck in the village as peasants. As it was, they had the chance to participate in the people's power.

—*Would you consider your officer's commission in the Air Force another beneficial aspect of the “dynamism of life” under Stalin?*

ZINOVIEV: Yes, I would. Stalin purged the Red Army. Whatever the rights and wrongs of the trials of Tukhachevsky and his colleagues (and Tukhachevsky himself was certainly a very able soldier), the purge did away with the old class of ill-educated and undermotivated officers and made way for a completely new intake. I was one of the latter—a young lieutenant infinitely (I can assure you) more competent than the officer I replaced when he was arrested.

—*Military historians tell us that if Tukhachevsky and the other generals had not been shot, Stalin's 1940 Winter Campaign against Finland wouldn't have fared so miserably.*

ZINOVIEV: That is nonsense. I can tell you something else: if Stalin had *not* purged the Red Army, the Soviet Union would have suffered defeat in its war with Hitler. Our country was saved by the Red Army's new and superior leadership and the spirit and competence of the new officer class.

—*“Life has become better, life has become gayer.” Who would ever have thought one would meet, fifty years on, a Soviet dissident ready to support Stalin's famous boast?*

ZINOVIEV: Well, life was extraordinarily fascinating, even if it was hard. I knew many people who realised that they were about to be shot—yet they praised Stalin. Stalin was a symbol of hope and vigour. A relative of mine, who knew that he was due to start a long prison sentence in a year's time, was (as people often were under Stalin) suddenly appointed to run a large factory. He grabbed the opportunity because, for him, the challenge of that single glorious year was worth more than a thousand years spent in uneventful living. “I know they will kill me—but this year is going to be *my* year”, he said. He was filled with the consciousness of making history.

—Would you have felt the same, and acted as he did?

ZINOVIEV: Oh yes, and I still feel the same today. Forty years now separate me from my wartime experiences as an officer of the Soviet Air Force. I would willingly exchange those forty years for one week of my earlier life as a fighter-pilot.

I am a child of the Revolution—you must always remember that—I'm a product of the Revolution. I went to school in the 1930s and I was brought up on the romanticism of the Revolution. For me the Revolution and everything that went with it make up the whole sense of life. This does not mean, however, that I support the present Soviet régime. No: I'm a man of the 1920s and 1930s.

**Y**OU ARE, PROFESSOR ZINOVIEV, a typical Soviet Man, even though you are a dissident—*Homo Sovieticus*, to quote the title of your recent book. . . .

ZINOVIEV: Absolutely. I am a Soviet Man. I spent 60 odd years of my life in Soviet society, and always did my best to serve it: I was, I believe, a good soldier, a good Air Force officer, a good professor, and a good and hard-working member of my collective. From that point of view I am Soviet Man *par excellence*.

—Yet your merciless exposure of the psychology of Soviet Man and Soviet society earned you your expulsion. I must, therefore, assume that in some important respects you are not Soviet Man after all.

ZINOVIEV: Oh, but I am. That does not mean that I do not criticise the system. Throughout the Soviet Union the system is always being criticised at all levels—but these criticisms come from within the system. They do not question its legitimacy.

People in the West tend to think that Soviet society is, in effect, a vast concentration camp. That just isn't true. Some of my satirical writings were first given in Russia as public lectures. For example, I delivered a chapter from *The Yawning Heights*—on leadership, of all things—as a lecture at the Military Academy. I had 200 generals in the audience, and they applauded. You can't do that in a concentration camp.

I regard the existence of the Soviet system as a natural fact. My problem is how to live within that given society.

—Suppose your post as a professor at Moscow University were made available to you again, and your unorthodoxies were quietly forgiven. Would you return to the Soviet Union?

ZINOVIEV: I'd return at once. But please understand: I was (as I've now repeatedly said) bitterly opposed to Stalin and Stalinism; yet that environment was my whole life. I fought for the Soviet society of which Stalin was the leader, and I fought for it willingly. At the same time I was so thoroughly alienated from Stalin himself that I was planning to assassinate him.

—You were?

ZINOVIEV: Oh, yes. Yet, whenever I was ordered by my superiors to put my life on the line for Stalin, I did so without hesitation.

SUPPOSE YOU DID GO BACK to the USSR to rejoin your "collective", but fell foul of the system again and were confined to a psychiatric institution. Would you consider yourself to be a psychologically normal person wrongly declared to be abnormal or insane?

ZINOVIEV: No, I would not. I would be abnormal.

—Ah, but we must not be caught again on the horns of the "normality" dilemma. You could be considered to be "abnormal" only in the sense in which anyone who wants to reform Soviet society is declared to be "abnormal" by the Soviet authorities. But surely you would not accept that standard. You would feel that you were perfectly normal and it was the system that was abnormal, would you not?

ZINOVIEV: But don't you see: I would be abnormal in a system in which the norm is to accept the system as it is. I'd be deviant from it.

—But would you, in your heart of hearts, regard yourself as psychologically ill?

ZINOVIEV: I would recognise the fact that from the system's point of view I was abnormal. And as there can be no other point of view within the Soviet system, I would accept and live with the fact that I was deviant.

—You are echoing Nikita Khrushchev. "A crime", Khrushchev said, "is a deviation from generally recognised standards of behaviour, frequently called mental disorder. The mental state of people who start calling for opposition to Communism is clearly not normal." I hate to labour this point, but for us it is the "abnormality" which made you write "Yawning Heights" and your other famous satires of Soviet society that guarantees your normality. We admire your wit and courage, because you wrote these satires despite the pressures of the Soviet environment and it is that environment we regard as sick. Can I induce you to say, in plain language, that you really feel the same as we do? For otherwise I'd have to assume that you cannot differentiate between yourself and the subject of your study.

ZINOVIEV: Soviet society is both the subject of my study and my natural habitat. My books and their author are abnormal phenomena in the context of Soviet life.

—But would you regard yourself as ill, and therefore rightly confined?

ZINOVIEV: In the given and only possible context, yes, I would.

—But we are now talking in the West, in Scotland, a long way away from that context. You are here precisely because you rejected that context.

ZINOVIEV: Your question has no meaning outside the context of Soviet society—therefore I cannot give you an answer outside the context of the Soviet system. Scotland is not the Soviet Union.

—An independent morality—one outside the system—does not, then, exist for you?

ZINOVIEV: It does not once you find yourself living in the system. "Morality" depends on the total impact of your environment. The poor cannot be very "moral." Nor can Soviet Man, in your sense of the word.

—A time-honoured Leninist principle?

ZINOVIEV: Simply a description of Soviet reality which is an immoral reality when seen from outside. Western morality does not belong to the Soviet system.

I'M BEGINNING TO WILT *under the pressure of your dialectic. You hated Stalin, yet you loved him. You were ready to kill him, yet you were also ready to die for him. Andrei Amalrik once said to me that the whole of Soviet society is psychologically abnormal. I can see what he meant.*

ZINOVIEV: I'm describing a very normal Soviet phenomenon. I fought for Stalin when my duties as an officer so demanded. I was ready to sacrifice my life for Stalin, for my military superiors and my comrades. When you have the privilege of being an officer in the Air Force, you want to be a good officer.

—There is, I suppose, a sense in which a young man—keen, vigorous and anxious to take on whatever may come his way—enjoys being a good soldier no matter what political leadership he may serve under. To be fully stretched in a fine corps of young men is an ambition we have all probably had. I suppose it was that sort of ambition that motivated you under Stalin.

ZINOVIEV: Yes, it was.

—Did you ever ask yourself whether it was Russia you were fighting for, or for Communism as represented by Stalin?

ZINOVIEV: No. It was my duty to do as I was being ordered. The Germans were my enemies. It was my job to fight them, and I enjoyed fighting them.

—Would you agree that you have, in that case, no moral grounds for condemning the great majority of German soldiers who fought for Hitler arguing exactly what you have just put to me: that in war you obey orders, and you obey them willingly because your first duty is to your country, your superiors, and your comrades—no matter whether you approve or disapprove of your leaders?

ZINOVIEV: The two are not comparable. In any case, as soon as the War was over I began to criticise the Soviet system, and developed the sharpest criticism yet seen in the Soviet Union.

But you must understand that my strictures came from within the system. The Soviet system was my home; my family; my life. Good or bad, I was part of it. It was beyond my power to change it. I have a daughter. She may be good or bad,

brilliant or stupid—but do I love her less if she is stupid or disappoints my expectations? Of course I don't.

—Clearly, then, you don't want to see the Soviet system overthrown.

ZINOVIEV: That is not my concern. At the same time, I can see the grave danger that the Soviet system represents for the Western world, and I want to help in averting that danger. I am a Russian first and foremost, and I want to see the Russian people happy and prosperous. That requires the disintegration of the Soviet empire. I know that.

—You want to see the empire destroyed but not the Communist system.

ZINOVIEV: As I want the Russian people to attain independence as a sovereign state, I must logically hope for the destruction of the Soviet empire. The Communist system is another matter.

—Would your Russia incorporate the Ukraine?

ZINOVIEV: No, I would allow the Ukrainians to take care of their own problems in whatever framework they wished.

My sole concern is the future of the Russian people. I write my books as a Russian writer for Russian readers. I should like my contemporaries to read my books. I want the Russian people to be educated, cultured, and self-confident so that they can share the treasures of world culture and contribute to them. I want to lift the Russians out of their centuries-old backwardness and subjection. It is impossible for the Russian people to attain any of these things within the Soviet empire.

—You said "the system is another matter." Are you suggesting that the Communist system would survive even if the Soviet empire were destroyed or fell apart for internal reasons?

ZINOVIEV: Yes, my forecast is that the system would survive. I am sure that the Communist system has a future. More than that, I feel confident that the Communist system will eventually embrace the whole of mankind. But the Soviet empire will perish.

WOULD YOU, IN FACT, want to see the Soviet empire defeated in war as a step towards the liberation of the Russian people and an independent Russian nation-state?

ZINOVIEV: It is not a matter of what I would want to happen. But I am as certain as anyone can be that in a Third World War both the Soviet Union and the USA would, in their different ways, suffer defeat. The Soviet Union would inevitably fall apart into a number of small and medium-size states; and I am convinced that this would be beneficial not only to the peoples concerned, but to the rest of mankind.

The Soviet empire in its present form is highly dangerous to the West. I keep coming back to this theme because the Western countries seem to underestimate the staying power of the Soviet system. As a war-making machine, the USSR

compares very favourably with the Western world, because it is an empire in a state of permanent mobilisation. It can destroy Western Europe. It can destroy the USA—even though it, too, will be destroyed in the process.

—*You seem to be talking as though a Third World War were inevitable.*

ZINOVIEV: I'm sure that it is inevitable.

—*Within a time-frame of, shall we say, ten years?*

ZINOVIEV: I cannot predict the time-frame, but one thing I can say: the Soviet Union will be the initiator of any future World War. I use the word "initiator" advisedly. I'm not saying the USSR will *start* the war "cold", as it were—but it will cause it to happen by stirring up trouble in one place, supporting anti-Western resentment in another, and so on. The policies the Soviet Union has been pursuing in Angola, Ethiopia,

Afghanistan, and more recently in Central America, are stations on the road to war. At the time of the Iranian crisis the Kremlin had an incomparable chance to hammer the West from a position of strength. It missed that chance.

Now it will need at least five years to concentrate its various advantages over the West at a point of maximum Western vulnerability. The rapid rearmament of the USA and the growing Western consciousness of the reality of the Soviet threat may, of course, throw the Kremlin's calculations out of gear. But let me at once tell you: the Soviet government can wait. If the correlation of forces does not suit the Soviet book in, let us say, five years from now, the Soviet leaders will bide their time until some crisis in the Western world provides the necessary opening. The Soviet empire is not an *ad hoc* aggressor. Its expansionism springs from the nature of its philosophy and is not susceptible to change—tactical delays, yes; permanent change, no.

*A concluding part of this conversation  
will be published in the May issue.*

## To Norman Nicholson, Rising Seventy-one

As you avowedly have served your time  
under the edged, striding shadow of Long Willie,  
so we, soft-footed sidesmen  
in the working nave of your plenty,  
continually must check our *données*  
—images, diction, ways of seeing—  
against the definitive, northern tang.  
So, should a line find us about the beck  
and it's fizzing like ginger pop,  
we can smirk but need to look further,  
to the name on the bottle . . .  
most times yours, of course.  
And we'll have done it once more—  
echoed, overheard, slipped  
in the living scree of that voice—  
and be at the bottom again,  
rubbing ruefully, looking up.  
But at least have stumbled on reality—  
what's more, recognised it as such—  
giving it Wigan, unearthed Normandy.

Normandy. Cartographers try to con us  
it's over there, over "t' girt beck."  
They can ship their la di da somewhere else.  
Because here's where it simmers,  
the map behind the map. And starts at Millom;  
that sea lion brandishing the thrilling rest  
on the prodigious tip of its nose.  
If you didn't invent it, you logged it between you  
—you and that canny off-comer Wainwright—  
he walking compasses, you words.

Whatever—it's done now, the work, the welding:  
paraded solid on umpteen shelves.  
As for your pet ambition, to see Halley's Comet—  
here's hoping you'll notch up sight of it yet  
and when it scalds your eye it sees you  
—like Magritte's eagle in "The Domain Of Arnheim"—  
spliced into the very rock: what else but Black Combe—  
indestructible, snowy sideburns and all.

*Geoffrey Holloway*

Roy Kerridge

# The Front Line Dog



**M**Y DOG PAISLEY only barks at white people. He never actually bites anyone, but his bark and wild-eyed appearance are frightening enough. A nervous little boy called Kwela, the carelessly brought-up offspring of a Rasta disc-jockey

family round the corner, faltered on meeting Paisley. I reassured him by explaining about the animal's colour prejudice. "Why does he attack his own side?" Kwela asked in wide-eyed surprise.

This rather shook me, as the idea of two opposing sides, forever antagonists, was strange and disagreeable. I could have pointed out that Paisley was coloured black, but the idea of having a militant pet, a canine Stokely Carmichael, seemed equally absurd. Kwela's name was self-consciously African, for he and his brothers and sisters had names chosen from every tribe on the Dark Continent. The Jamaican disc-jockeys, of course, had long changed their names from Arthur and Selwyn Smith to Jah Zoom and Jah Callaloo. But, outside show-business, Rastafarianism continues to dwindle among London's West Indians and their children.

On the high street, I noticed a small brown dog trotting obediently behind the heels of a good-humoured coloured youth, who strode rapidly along. "That's a well-trained dog you've got there", I remarked. The dog trotted nonchalantly into the road and under an enormous lorry. It avoided the wheels by a miracle, and rejoined its master with a casual nod.

"He can look after himself all right", said the youth admiringly. "Do you know who he is? That's Benson the Front Line Dog. For ages he's been living wild upon the Front Line, and all the drug-peddlers know him and give him food and shelter. Then he got hurt and I took him to the vet and kept him ever since. He's a good dog, 'cos when I'm under pressure and stay in my room, he takes himself for walks."

"Under pressure", among young men of Caribbean background, usually means an attack of acute melancholia, akin to the American "blues." I was sorry to hear that my dog-loving friend suffered from this, but intrigued to learn that the name "Front Line" now means the nearest strip of drug-peddling territory. Once, "the Front Line" referred to a single place—Railton Road, Brixton. I told him of Paisley, named after a

well-known Ulsterman of similar temperament, and he listened sympathetically. "My dog says 'woof woof' to your dog", he said gravely on parting, and gave me a friendly slap on the back.

Forgetting about dogs, I mused for a while on the new phenomenon of Front Lines. There are four in London that I know of, if you count the strip of pavement in front of a well-known pub in Finsbury Park. Anyone who stands still here for more than ten minutes is almost certain to be questioned by the police, as a coloured police officer in plain clothes recently found out to his cost. Only relatively small stretches of Railton Road and its counterparts could be classed as Front Lines. If all four Front Lines were put end to end, they would reach only half-way along Pall Mall.

In view of the thousands of streets in London whose most visible inhabitants are West Indians, it seems to me a trifle unfair that West Indians are often judged by Front-Liners. How much more agreeable is the view America once had of its Negroes, as shown in such films as *Green Pastures* and *Cabin in the Sky*. Such a view could just as well apply to London's West Indians and the new coloured Londoners. It would not be the whole story, but it would be a tale worth telling, in a capital where the Rastafarian cult is daily losing ground to Caribbean-style Christianity. One former Rasta cut off his long "dread-lock" hair and put it in a plastic bag. At evangelical meetings, he now concludes his speech of repentance by triumphantly holding up this shorn-off bird's nest of locks, to gasps of awe from the Sisters. "Behold!"

AT RAILTON ROAD, on a clear blue morning before the shops had opened, I saw not a dog but a white horse pulling a ragman's cart painted in gypsy colours. High above my head, a kestrel hovered. Tired of the view, the bird veered away towards the south-west, and left me wondering. Supposing it was Br'er Hawk from the Jamaican folk tale? (According to legend, Br'er Anancy the Spider promised Br'er Hawk eleven chickens "and the twelfth when you can find it." That's why Br'er Hawk is seen flying over Jamaican chicken-coops so often; he's still looking.) If Br'er Hawk had decided to seek out his countrymen, what would he see as he fluttered above rows and rows of slate or red-tile rooftops, the Caribbean Coronation Streets of Croydon, Kilburn, Willesden and Wembley? He would find no streets that were wholly

Caribbean, and no "black communities" where everyone knew each other, but if he didn't find the elusive twelfth chicken, he would at least find plenty of things to remind him of Home.

London is a city transformed. On summer nights, children and young men stand and talk in front of their houses, while others ride round and round on bicycles. Few play games with bat and ball. Most of them prefer verbal games—jokes, riddles, stories and rhymes, both innocent and knowing. Shouts of glee or anger come from young and old alike. Young men speak to boys ten years their junior as equals, with no condescension. They show them how to repair bikes and mend punctures, and talk to them about sport, music, local gossip. The hawk-eyes would note a bike-obsessed world where wheels and handlebars disappear, and reappear again on different frames as youthful inventors or re-assemblers set to work. A few of these bikes may be stolen, but most of them are altered, broken or improved for the sheer joy of tinkering. Older boys, without realising it, are training the young to be mechanics.

At midnight in midsummer, when all good hawks are asleep, the streets still echo with shouts and laughter. Those children who are not "under manners" (discipline) are still playing with their elders. Those "under heavy manners" have not been out at all, and have spent English-style evenings of homework and television. Many children, egged on by parents, aspire to become barristers—the highest job they can envisage. Some succeed, but most do not, and this is no tragedy, as the Bar would not suit everyone who wants to join it without knowing why.

In pursuit of such ambitions, many West Indian parents send their children to private schools. After leaving school, a scaling-down of aspirations often takes place. This is in contrast with the young white English, who tend to have no ambitions at all, outside sport or pop music. One girl I know, a shop assistant instead of a barrister, was told by God in a dream to stop tormenting herself by studying law, but try and please customers with her sunny personality instead.

Girls find it far easier than boys to get jobs. Office and shop jobs are thought proper for them, and employees are less likely to look on them as "rioters." Mechanical and manual jobs are in short supply.

Boys seem to take far longer than girls to feel adult. At twenty-two, my friend Humphrey Brown had the happy nature of a carefree boy of ten, and although he was full of grandiose schemes, it was hard to imagine him working. Now at twenty-seven, encouraged by a loving girl-friend, he is a competent plasterer and seems to have a secure future ahead of him.

Many, if not most, of the young men are sports mad, and hurry to and from gymnasiums and parks in jump-suits and training-shoes. The "mugger" or "Front Line" image that coloured youths have inherited from the disastrous riots of 1981 now serves a useful purpose. Hell's Angels, punks, Mohawks and skinheads avoid these streets. On long bus journeys, this is very noticeable. In the districts known as "inner cities" in absurd imitation of American jargon, the young men on the top deck are neat, short-haired, and saying things like: "He's a dread football player, guy!" (High praise.) A mile further out, in the suburbs and countryside, older passengers quail as loutish gangs of white youths swear, belch,

discuss drinking sprees, crimes and fights, and sprawl arrogantly across the seats.

AS SUMMER ENDS, the streets empty and tempers get shorter. Br'er Hawk shivers and thinks of Home. On the first hot day of spring, if there is one, crowds emerge with happy shouts of recognition, as if awakening from hibernation. Older men, to whom bicycles mean nothing, meet in masculine fellowship at the West Indian barber shop at the corner. Some stand outside in the doorway, roaring with laughter and shouting in almost impenetrable dialect, which they term "patois." All of them can speak standard English when they want to, but regard "patois" as a clubbable luxury. "This is how we talk when we don't want the white man to understand."

Many of the jokes concern Barbadians, the butts of coarser Trinidadians and Jamaicans. "Bajan jokes" exhausted, some men thoughtlessly tease a half-wit who stands shouting in the middle of the road, his mind having proved unequal to the challenges and rebuffs of Britain. Inside the shop, a fat man is chaffed for having so little hair to cut. "That's why me get up early, me got such a lot of face to wash", he replies.

Once the English ear is attuned to the patois, sentences and phrases unravel themselves, and the "Jamaican language" turns out to be English after all. Some words, such as "keening" instead of crying, have an honourable British ancestry. "Where you a go?" can mean "Where are you going?" or "Where have you been?" according to intonation and circumstances. And so on.

Black-power intellectuals often claim there is a West Indian language, "Creolese." The Arts Council sponsors many poets who write phonetically, but most West Indians do not, or cannot, read such literature, and have never heard of "Creolese." (Similarly, I have noticed that Cockney-speakers cannot read Cockney dialogue, as they are used to reading, and perhaps thinking, in Standard English.) "I can rattle away in patois better than anyone", a bewildered young man told the librarian at Brixton, who was also of West Indian descent. "Yet I can't understand these poems at all." "That might be because when they write patois, they usually get it wrong", she replied, hitting the nail on the head.

Back at the hairdresser's, the old men discuss "*ganja*"—marijuana—in amused disapproval. Unlike old white Englishmen, most of them have tried it at least once in their youth. "*Ganja* makes you go in the kitchen for a knife and you come back with a spoon", is the verdict.

WHEELING AROUND, Br'er Hawk swoops to another corner, and perches on a "stop light", as every West Indian calls a traffic light. From here he looks down on a little Pentecostal chapel bought long ago from the Methodists, from which tambourines and singing can be heard.

"It's going to rain, rain, it's going to rain!" the normally prim English-born girls sing passionately. The pastor has just concluded the time-hallowed story of Noah's Ark with the remark that there are floods in our time—"floods of despair, floods of

tears and grief"—and that these can be overcome if we turn to Jesus. If an English *Green Pastures* is ever filmed, the producer might find inspiration here, for the pastor goes on to speak of Elijah in the wilderness being fed by a "John Crow" (Jamaican turkey-buzzard), and a young deacon quotes the Queen of Sheba as saying to Solomon, "Say man, I never *seen* such stuff!"

Christ and Godliness are a protection against the devil and witchcraft. One sect, the Mount Zionists, are dedicated to fighting witchcraft, or "obeah." "Obeah men", or witch-doctors, are not unknown in London today, and are greatly feared. Learning their craft in the Jamaican bush, in a secret school known as a "balmyard", these witch-men have the power to place or lift curses. Consequently, Hallowe'en celebrations in schools seem shocking to many West Indian parents, who see nothing funny about witches. If school rules can be modified to suit Indian pupils, I do not see why Hallowe'en cannot be banned to please West Indians. I would not be sorry if this were done, as I find that American folk-customs, however English they may once have been, strike a jarring note when they return. Mother's Day is bad enough! But, it may be that laughing at evil makes it less frightening.

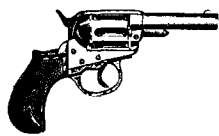
PERHAPS INFLUENCED BY the Rastafarian colours—red, green and gold—ever changing below him on the stop light, Br'er Hawk grows restless and soars back to the Front Line where I

found him. Local Front Lines and their goings on half-attract, half-amuse some schoolboys and young men who seldom or ever visit them. Those who want to seem daring affect to speak of the familiarly. This reminds me very much of my own young days in the 1950s, when "the toughest coffee bar in town" was joked about constantly. As we sipped coffee in tamer places, we often wished we were there instead. Front Lines similarly affect boys who play in harmless streets some distance away. An ambitious boy, I could not be satisfied until I had made myself at home in the tough coffee bar; and Front Lines gain recruits in similar fashion.

The newest Front Line is a tiny corner of Sandringham Road in Dalston, a shabby neighbourhood of old houses awaiting an Islingtonian middle class who don't object to railway bridges. Leaving Br'er Hawk in Brixton, I wandered past the cabbage stalks of Ridley Road Market, and made for Sandringham Road. I knew I had reached it when I heard a tremendous "cussing" or swearing, and traced the Front Line to a small café and a few yards of pavement in front of it. "I'll knock you from here to Barbados!" one beefy Rasta roared at another.

This is a threat that travels well, and is far more impressive when uttered in England than in Jamaica. Big, strong, healthy, fearless men, the café-goers were typical Front-Liners, and discussed the marijuana trade at the top of their voices. Their moods swung from anger to wild hilarity at a moment's notice. One policeman stood tensely on a far-off corner and stared at them disapprovingly. Two doors or so away, a West-Indian-

## "Riots?" "Rebellions! Revolutions!"



London  
**BLACK PEOPLE in Britain should not rule out violence in the attempt to better their lives, Kwame Touré—the former "Black Power" leader Stokely Carmichael—said on television last night:**

"If one is a slave and one wants to be free, one must initiate slave revolts.

"The issue isn't to take violence, but not to eliminate violence from one's means. What the oppressor tries to do is to make you say that you can use everything else except violence, and all we're saying is that is philosophically incorrect.

"The oppressed must understand that violence is a viable alternative and sometimes a necessary alternative."

Mr Touré was talking by satellite from Washington to the "Black-on-Black" programme on Channel 4.

He was refused entry to Britain ten days earlier because of remarks made on a speaking tour in Britain last year which allegedly incited people to use violence and throw hand grenades. He was asked last night if black people here should organise riots. He replied:

"We wouldn't say organising riots—rebellions, yes."

THE GUARDIAN

London  
**New Statesman**

**KWAME TOURÉ**

INSIDE  
What they don't want you to hear



this country last year by Mr Kwame Touré (formerly Stokely Carmichael), who was recently prohibited entry into Britain by the Home Office.

"A hundred years ago [sic] at the Conference [sic] of Berlin, European men began the process of dividing up Africa into colonial possessions. This year, as part of the centenary activities, Kwame Touré was to have toured Britain speaking about the consequences of this act for Africa and black people."

A few extracts will show just how reasonable "A Call to Reason" is:

"Any African serving in the Army in Britain—who has no business there in the first place—could never find himself fighting in Ireland, if he has the slightest understanding of the history there. Africa has been raped and plundered by every Western country except Ireland.

London  
**CALL TO REASON** is the heading of a two-page item in the "New Statesman", 27 January, which gives extracts from a speech made in

When Ireland is involved in a struggle against British imperialism, consequently it is our job to help them in the struggle. . . .

The first church in the world was in Africa, the very intellectual development of the church itself was the result of Africans, in Alexandria—why St Augustine ain't nothing but an African. . . .

ONCE YOU KNOW you are fighting for socialism in Africa, you know Britain is our major enemy, you hit the enemy anywhere you find him. . . . Pan Africanism is the only solution to our problems. Brothers and sisters, we say that in order to wage revolution it must be done in an organised manner. . . .

Africa will be free, unified and socialist, no force on earth can stop it. The only question you must ask yourself is what contribution as a human being do I make to the onward march of humanity? Daughters, sons of Africa, your mother is calling loud and clear, come now, organise with the Africa Revolution. Ready. Ready for Revolution."

I NEVER THOUGHT a time would come [Peter Simple writes] when I might be moved to cry: "Come back, Kingsley Martin!" It looks as if that time is near.

DAILY TELEGRAPH

owned hardware shop proved to be full of helpful assistants, who almost tumbled over each other in their eagerness to serve me. In another shop I saw a Rasta painting, showing fleets of boats headed for an Africa overgrown with marijuana jungles. "*Repatriation—the only answer*" was the title.

However attractive such dreams may be, it seems to me that the real attraction of being a Rasta is being able to bask in the admiration of white intellectuals, arty types and pop fans, particularly girls. In a sense a Front Line is a meeting place where the young white middle class can find West Indians. On the Line, the Rastas are on the streets, accosting passers-by with offers of *ganja*. Behind them are not more and worse Rastas, but no Rastas at all—merely sports and bike fans and church people. The "druggy" side of West Indian life here has developed along lines laid down by the new white middle class. Its victims are Rastas sent mad by drugs and returned by doctors to anguished parents at Wembley or Willesden Green.

**W**HAT OF THE YOUNG English middle class whose parents are West Indians? To find them we must leave hawks and crows behind, forget Paisley and Benson the Front Line Dog, and enter another world altogether, one that seems at first to be totally cut off from folk tradition. In short, we must enter the Friends' Centre near Euston Station. There, last September the twenty-ninth, an "International Black Solidarity Rally" took place. Its star attraction was Stokely Carmichael, who has taken the African name of Kwame Touré (from Ghana and Guinea, respectively).

The audience were well-groomed arrogant young coloured people who looked like social workers. Some no doubt did work for the social services, or in Rights Centres, Arts Centres or Black Youth Centres. Edged out of normal, useful professions, these graduates had been encouraged to capitalise on their "blackness", and a make-believe rate-supported world of Centres has been formed to accommodate them. No wonder they are enthusiasts for Black Power, for their careers depend upon their colour. One girl I know, who worked as a teacher and never regarded herself as "black", was passed over for promotion again and again. Finally she gave in, and, embarrassed at first, began to mouth "black jargon" to would-be employers. At once, with shouts of joy, white ILEA-workers scooped her from her humble school and placed her in an office for coordinating "ethnic studies of black pupil underachievement" at five times her former salary. Coloured library assistants, when promoted, do not become Head Librarians but Heads of Ethnic Advisory Units.

For some reason, those in authority feel especially friendly towards coloured people who demand "separate facilities for blacks"—*apartheid*. Kwame Touré's message fell upon many welcoming ears. As the same fashionable young people are seen at all the same "black gatherings", at theatres, Centres, and Theatre Centres, they have come to look on themselves as the Black Community. Similarly, white careerist revolutionaries tend to look on themselves as the Working Class.

A tall girl in guerrilla costume checked my plastic bag, and I was admitted. The hall was crowded, with one or two white

faces and a very English atmosphere. The affair had been organised by the Hackney Black People's Association, *Voice* newspaper, and others. Messages of goodwill from Sinn Féin, SWAPO, and the Palestinian Liberation Organisation came fast and furious. A dub-ranting poet recited "*Nelson Mandela is a very fine fella*" and other jingles, apparently in the solemn belief that they were high art. At last it was Stokely Carmichael Touré's turn to speak. Resplendent in a white suit, he arose to tumultuous cheers and announced: "Daughters and Sons of Africa, we greet you!"

As he spoke, for what seemed an hour, his fluty voice rising and falling and gaining in momentum, I was reminded irresistibly of a West Indian sermon. A Trinidadian by birth, there is nothing American about Touré. His words, if analysed, would indicate a desire for an armed world-revolution by black people, but they were accepted by the audience as "good preaching." With dim memories of childhood, everyone fell into a churchy mood. There was a subtle something lacking (possibly God), but I saw nothing satanic about Touré. When, again and again, he called for "*or-gan-is-ation!*" and everyone roared approval, you could sense that they would go home happy, talkative, and totally disorganised.

Quite right too! Why should atheists be denied the pleasure of church-going? Here they could shout "*Analytical, man!*" instead of "*That's right, Lord!*", and feel themselves a real Black Community. Touré constantly spoke of "the enemy", meaning white capitalists and Zionists, just as if he were a West Indian preacher talking about the devil. When at last it was over, a woman threw her arms in the air and cried "I feel uplifted!" The meeting broke up in a mood of euphoria.

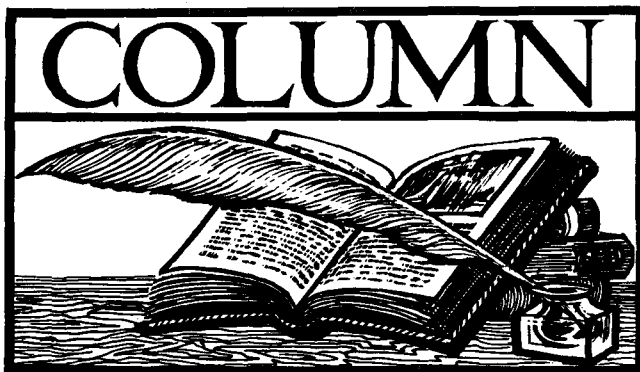
At home the dog Paisley rushed roaring to the door as I entered. Paisley's colour prejudice does not run very deep, but what of that of the English leftists who ignore decent West Indians and praise Front-Liners, and who have shunted ambitious young coloured intellectuals into a dead-end tunnel of nonsensical "Black Careers"? They deserve to be bitten by Benson the Front Line Dog.



## Burial

In the garden of a friend  
 Women wanly envelop what was  
 A waking man in final linen.  
 It is like wrapping up a stone.  
 They seal the skin, bind up the head,  
 Veil the dead fragrance of the face.  
 Watchers at the garden gates  
 Discuss the lights in Jerusalem,  
 Unsure of the safety of their homes.  
 They do not talk of promises  
 Of how among the seated strangers  
 Like turned earth breaking clear  
 Christ stirs, groping for the garden air.

*Patrick Hare*



A WRITER FRIEND surprised me recently by asking for advice. Most of the authors I know are secretive devils, playing their cards or notebooks as close to the chest as car manufacturers planning a new model. But this man had a real and public problem. He had made his name as an expert on France. Now his publisher was suggesting that he write about Germany. What did I think? Was it a good idea?

Always crisp and decisive, I temporised. "Of course, anything *you* write. . . ." "Yes, yes, but a book on *Germany*?" So I came cleaner. "Why not Italy? Wine . . . sunshine . . . opera . . . *la dolce vita*. . . ." "No: I don't like Italy." "Oh. Oh, I see. Well. H'm. Er, well, I suppose—oh, all right. Germany, then."

It was partly that I'd seen so many attempts to explain Germany to the British fizzle out into remaindered and second-hand books. The old appeal of the pine-forests and the Lorelei and the steins of foaming beer had faded: with musical-boxes, lederhosen, and Alpine hats, it now had a faintly comic air. Flaxen-haired Gretchens seemed archaic; half-timbered hunting-lodges looked fake. The jolly *Gemütlichkeit* had vanished with World War II. On TV and cinema screens, Hitler's hellish drama was still playing: every tenth-rate impressionist could do his brutal Nazi bit: "*Ve heff vays of mecking you tock viss a fonny ecksent*." And for those who at last realised how few of their German contemporaries were even born before 1945, there was another unattractive stereotype: *Wir Wunderkinder*, heirs of the economic miracle. Cigars, Mercedes, towering office-blocks, tanned overfed tourists losing the new battle of the bulge—it was all too much for envious onlookers. Like the Japanese a few years later, the Germans were accused of working too hard, taking themselves too seriously, being materialistic—i.e., enjoying success. All that *Liebfraumilch* had a whiff of sour grapes.

It's ONE THING to acknowledge this: it's quite another to overcome one's grudging emotions. When I first went to Germany as a civilian after the war, I was still slightly chilled by the uniforms of railway employees, distantly recalling more sinister garb. Later, as the rubble was cleared and new cities sprouted, I looked in vain for cobbled alleyways, old dark houses, picturesque nooks and crannies. The few historic buildings that still stood seemed sanitised, isolated, carefully on show. The skyscrapers dwarfed them; admirable town planning made everything municipal. Shops were full of "contemporary" knick-knacks: even antiques were displayed

under neon lighting behind plate glass. The same thing was to happen, all too soon, to Britain's provincial cities, blitzed by modernising councils as much as by falling bombs. But the sparsity of links with a nourishing past made the *Wirtschaftswunder* seem unreal, uneasy. German democracy seemed deliberate, spick-and-span like a house spring-cleaned for visitors. New newspapers, new trade unions, new government buildings in Bonn: with modern seating, microphones, and small desks for note-taking, the *Bundestag* far outshone the House of Commons; and official press arrangements made reporters seem spoon-fed. It was not that chauvinist foreigners feared a revival of Nazism: it was rather that post-War German society resembled cut flowers, truncated at the roots.

SUCH WERE the first reactions of one callow Englishman. Later, as I saw more of Germany, I felt more at home. The countryside still looked alien—rather American in the tatty transition areas between country and town. But the too-clean novelty soon wore off the cities. Touches of friendly shabbiness appeared, and once "contemporary" styles acquired a period air. Young Germans showed—if only in protest clothes and hairdo—that they shared misgivings about the "miracle"; and if German films, plays and paintings had a tortured, hysterical manner reminiscent of the old expressionist *avant-garde*, the bookshops recalled a yet older tradition. The Germans were *Dichter und Denker* still. A poet like Hans Magnus Enzensberger, speaking and writing almost perfect English, a graduate of the protest movement and a citizen of the ever more "Anglo-Saxon" literary world, was nevertheless deeply, authentically, and very attractively German—subtle, witty, and full of common sense.

BUT HOW TO communicate these complex, contradictory feelings? How to "anatomise" Germany, as my friend's publishers suggest? In brief compass, I've tried several times, pointing a microphone at students, artists, novelists, cultural bureaucrats, cabaret performers, film directors, critics, journalists, architects, musicologists, and politicians. A few weeks ago, invited by a German foundation, I made another whirlwind sortie, grabbing impressions in the intervals of lecturing, trying to seize the moment and see if I had hold of something solid.

It's a weird business, playing the visiting speaker. At heart, you feel inadequate, wondering whether your hosts will find any spark of interest in the humdrum things you have to say. The podium, like the microphone and the printing press, makes huge demands on human patience: why should we sit and listen in docile rows to this unknown windbag telling us his great thoughts? But with luck and a few jokes, patience takes the strain. It's the speaker who really suffers, growing steadily more bored with himself, being permanently on display like royalty, continually meeting another group of strangers, endlessly doing his best to be affable and alert. At the end of each day he retires to a different hotel room in a different city, living a neat, inturnd, old-maidish life bounded by the early

call and the next day's clean shirt and socks. After a day or two, he feels like the hero of Desmond Bagley's *The Tightrope Men*, who awakes not knowing what country he's in—and then can't recognise the face in his shaving-mirror.

My point of departure this time was Stuttgart in Baden-Württemberg, the south-westernmost *Land*. At less than 6%, it has Germany's lowest rate of unemployment. Although the home of Porsche and Daimler-Benz, Stuttgart still seems pleasantly provincial—a small town ringed by hills and forests, with vineyards creeping down the steep slopes almost to the streets. Less provincial was the leaflet about restaurants and nightlife handed me in the hotel lobby.

"GIRLS GIRLS GIRLS GIRLS GIRLS" read the border of one raunchy advertisement, advising readers to "climb aboard before the train [of naked women] goes." Other panels paraded the charms of "models" with names like Brigitte, Sabine, and Betty, offering "discretion" and (in English) "*a nice time*." Some of their establishments, it seemed, opened in the morning; but almost all firmly announced that they closed at 11 p.m. Provincialism? Union regulations? Probably just catering for the proverbially industrious Swabians, who have to get to work early next day.

The train I caught sported no "models": but the railway platform did. The *Bundesbahn* is of course heavily subsidised; but that alone doesn't explain why it, unlike many national rail systems, manages to tell passengers where which coach of the train will stop. Each platform has an indicator board with a model of every train, showing first, second, and restaurant cars, and indicating precisely where the traveller's standing. A simple idea, and a very good one: I suppose it depends on a regularity of service seemingly unknown to British Rail. No less impressive are the trains themselves. The Inter-City and Trans-Europe-Express services still have compartments instead of promiscuous "club cars" where you share everyone's noise and smoke. And the ride is so smooth that it feels like flying.

Next stop was Heidelberg, largely preserved in World War II, but laid waste in the 17th century by war and fire—proving yet again that our epoch holds no patent on destructiveness. Here on the turbulent Neckar river, amid the baroque streets below the red sandstone ruins of the castle, it was easy to feel the tragedy of Franco-German conflict, for so long tearing Europe apart. Walter Hallstein, the first President of the EEC Commission, who grew up in the Rhineland, once told me how his history master at school had taught him that France and Germany were hereditary enemies—a belief no doubt being dinned into French children at the same time a few miles to the West. Today, Heidelberg is charmingly peaceful—except for the tourists who invade it in the summer. It has one of the longest pedestrian precincts outside Venice: the *Hauptstrasse*, running for two kilometres parallel to the river. Here, municipalising works: the buildings are old, and the street is gently curved.

Bonn, too, has a large pedestrian precinct, spreading outwards from the market-place. Nearby, there are second-hand bookstalls—a sure sign of civilisation—and new bookshops too. As in Britain, there's a boom in Orwell:

translations, symposia, frightworks about 1984. Anglophones, however, have to pay dearly to read English or American paperbacks: at some DM16 each, they're nearly twice the price they command back home. Scope, perhaps, for some wily "parallel importer" with a capacious van.

Bonn's shops are modern and fancy, but the market still flourishes—a reminder that the capital, as Germans say, is "the Federal village." Dr Adenauer, with one eye on Berlin and reunification, wanted to keep it that way; he even refused to modernise the absurdly modest railway station. Now, John le Carré's "small town in Germany" is pretty well accepted as the *Hauptstadt*, as no doubt it should be after 35 years. But foreigners would be wrong to conclude that the post-War division of Germany no longer rankles. In Bonn, otherwise obsessed by the Kiessling affair and the Lamsdorf allegations, thoughtful German friends were at pains to remind me that, yes, Reunification remains an unsolved problem—not just a vain aspiration or a relic of former rhetoric. No one supposes that a German government could be seduced from the West by a Soviet promise of unity; but the bonds of family and language are real, and much attention is turned Eastwards, to any signs of liberalisation, or any bland words from the DDR. Some West Germans feel that they understand the Russians better than Americans do; and one scion of a famous imperial clan told me that he now feared "pacifistic neutralism." Chancellor Kohl, he claimed, was the only real "European" in the present Government.

THE COUNTERPART of such forebodings is greater willingness to discuss the past. In Hamburg, in a sailing club overlooking the choppy Alster, I met an historian who against much opposition has been probing German responsibility for World War I. In Düsseldorf, in the very building where Hitler once recruited funds from German industry, witnesses were frank about the warm reception he had had. "But wasn't it hard to know, at that time, what sort of man he was?" "Oh, no; oh, no. They knew. So did we."

My final port of call was Berlin. There, on my last visit, chance had confirmed one of Dick Whittington's dreams. Blowing about on the Kurfürstendamm was an unclaimed bonanza of DM240 in used notes. No such nest-egg fell at my feet this time; but with a few hours to spare in the evening I was able to compare television, East and West. Some German friends had lamented that the Federal Republic, richer than ever despite the fading of the miracle, still had only three television channels. In Berlin, as well as the US forces' programme, there's always the DDR. Over the years, East German TV has improved somewhat: it includes comedy, serials, and popular music. But on the occasions I've watched it, the grey didactic tone has been overpowering. Any visit by an East-bloc or Third-world potentate tends to be filmed *ad nauseam*: coming down the aircraft steps, shaking hands, inspecting the guard of honour, exchanging speeches, marching off to the waiting cars, appearing on some hallowed balcony, making further speeches, shaking hands again, attending an official reception, while a reverent commentator recites the *curriculum vitae*, quotes the trade figures, stresses

the importance of the People's Ruritania Republic or the Emperor of Bananaville.

From this, even lengthy West German talk shows or lumbering comedies are a blessed relief. For a British viewer, there's also an odd perspective on his own country. Arriving in Berlin last summer, I was amazed to find one TV channel devoted to the Wimbledon tennis. On another, I entered a strange Germanic London, perhaps a modern equivalent of *Die Dreigroschenoper*. It was *Minder*, dubbed. This time, under the title *Das Tödliche Patt*, "The Deadly Stalemate", there was the IRA drama *Harry's Game*. In this guise, it was wonderfully seedy and sinister—the more so since its Belfast accents were replaced by slangy vernacular German voices which, *mutatis mutandis*, could have come from the Falls Road.

What picture of the UK the Germans get from such features remains a mystery: it may be as patchy as my own snapshots of the Federal Republic. Everywhere I went, people asked me: was Britain really "European"—would the Labour Party pull out of the Community—was the Thatcher policy going to work? I tried to explain Britain's slow evolution, Neil Kinnock's political problems, the row about local taxes ("rate-capping"), and other arcane national concerns. In each case, I found that Germany had similar worries: even rate-capping is not unknown.

I came away convinced that my writer friend faced a rewarding assignment. A good book on Germany could tell us all something about ourselves.

## A Distant Prospect

(Class photograph, 1930)

This was Standard Three, the school Church Street  
Junior Boys', Beeston, Nottinghamshire.  
You can tell that it was summer by the way  
The children squint and wrinkle at the gaze  
Of prophecy as lens and pupil meet.

Also the way they're dressed is a thermometer:  
Shirts or jerseys, though a few have come  
In Sunday jackets, unaccustomed ties.  
This small élite has, pinned on its lapels,  
Badges of office, each boy a monitor.

These frown responsibly. And you can tell  
By strictly parted hair, its recent wet  
Submission to the comb or brush, that they  
Might one day be full corporals, shop-stewards,  
Under-Managers. They will do quite well,

Though few or none will ever own commissions,  
Desks or telephones. The unpromoted,  
Their heads close-cropped or rough as coconuts,  
Grin or scowl. Here and there you see  
A stare of undeceivable suspicion.

Three of the boys are specky-four-eyes. Their  
Wearing glasses does not imply a legendary  
Love of learning: bad eyesight, that is all.  
You look at these small faces and you smell  
Their element, the grey imprisoned air.

Is one of them the nine-year-old you were?  
It's possible. You only know that now  
Those few suspicious sceptics seem to see  
A menace in the black-cowled camera,  
Cold glitter in the lens's inky glare.

Vernon Scannell

*Zbigniew Herbert*

## Mr Cogito on the Need for Precision

1.

Mr Cogito  
is alarmed by a problem  
in the domain of applied mathematics

the difficulties we encounter  
with operations of simple arithmetic

children are lucky  
they add apple to apple  
subtract grain from grain  
the sum is correct  
the kindergarten of the world  
pulsates with a safe warmth

particles of matter have been measured  
heavenly bodies weighed  
and only in human affairs  
inexcusable carelessness reigns supreme  
the lack of precise information

over the immensity of history  
wheels a spectre  
the spectre of indefiniteness

how many Greeks were killed at Troy  
—we don't know

to give the exact casualties  
on both sides  
in the battle at Gaugamela  
at Agincourt  
Leipzig  
Kutno

and also the number of victims  
of terror  
of the white  
the red  
the brown  
—O colours innocent colours—

—we don't know  
truly we don't know

Mr Cogito  
rejects the sensible explanation  
that this was long ago  
the wind has thoroughly mixed the ashes  
the blood flowed to the sea

sensible explanations  
intensify the alarm  
of Mr Cogito

because even what  
is happening under our eyes  
evades numbers  
loses the human dimension

somewhere there must be an error  
a fatal defect in our tools  
or a sin of memory

2.

a few simple examples  
from the accounting of victims

in an airplane disaster  
it is easy to establish  
the exact number of the dead

important for heirs  
and those plunged in grief  
for insurance companies

we take the list of passengers  
and the crew  
next to each name  
we place a little cross

it is slightly harder  
in the case  
of train accidents

bodies torn to pieces  
have to be put back together  
so no head  
remains ownerless

during elemental  
catastrophes  
the arithmetic  
becomes complicated

we count those who are saved  
but the unknown remainder  
neither alive  
nor definitely dead  
is described by a strange term  
the missing

they still have the chance  
to return to us  
from fire  
from water  
the interior of the earth

if they return—that's fine  
if they don't—too bad

3.

now Mr Cogito  
climbs  
to the highest tottering  
steps of indefiniteness

how difficult it is to establish the names  
of all those who perished  
in the struggle with inhuman power

the official statistics  
reduce their number  
once again pitilessly  
they decimate those who have died a violent death  
and their bodies disappear  
in abysmal cellars  
of huge police buildings

eyewitnesses  
blinded by gas  
deafened by salvoes  
by fear and despair  
are inclined toward exaggeration

accidental observers  
give doubtful figures  
accompanied by the shameful  
word "about"

and yet in these matters  
accuracy is essential  
we must not be wrong  
even by a single one

we are despite everything  
the guardians of our brothers

ignorance about those who have disappeared  
undermines the reality of the world

it thrusts into the hell of appearances  
the devilish net of dialectics  
proclaiming there is no difference  
between the substance and the spectre

therefore we have to know  
to count exactly  
call by the first name  
provide for a journey

in a bowl of clay  
millet poppy seeds  
a bone comb  
arrowheads  
and a ring of faithfulness

amulets

*Translated by John Carpenter  
and Bogdana Carpenter*

*John Mole*

## Looking at an Old School Photograph

Doctor Evers must by now be dead  
Who lived already in a passing tense,  
His own parenthesis, inventing  
Mortal tropes that could not be construed.

I thank him, though, for every foot of metre,  
For the iamb and the trochee, and the anapaest  
Which turned dactylic in mid sentence,  
And the spondee and the spondee and the spondee  
Marching with us to the end of time. . . .

A bachelor, he deplored the feminine ending.  
*Death* was a word he certainly approved,  
A good, firm, manly stress upon it  
And a fine games player, this collective noun.

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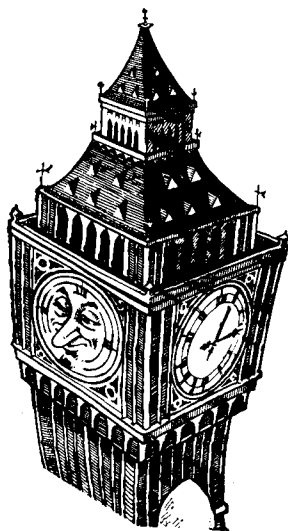
# NOTES & TOPICS

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## *Of Rushes to Disaster*

# The Balaclava Factor

*By Edward Pearce*



THINGS ARE GOING WRONG. Not a few things, or random things, but a succession of things. Mrs Thatcher began her second term of office with an interview in which she described her heavy cold as something which might give trouble to other people but not to her: she was different. This personal hubris which was in fact followed by her two eye operations, about which her spokesmen were uncandid to the point of deception, could be taken as symbolic.

A sort of arrogance has got at the Government, and they are

now making the mistakes which go with arrogance. The professional failure of the Foreign Office to know about, and make the correct judgments on, the Grenada invasion was fully endorsed by the Prime Minister; while the Foreign Secretary was put forward to defend the Government's want of information in a speech which destroyed that Minister's prospects for the leadership for ever.

A little-noted report from a firm of stockbrokers, Hoare & Govett, announces that inflation may double to 10% if public spending is not controlled; and to a degree which is very greatly noted, public spending is not being controlled. The Public Spending Borrowing Requirement has reached in ten months the upper limit of where it should have been at the end of twelve months. Attempts to cut expenditure are not succeeding, though they attract the utmost bad publicity when they fall without discrimination upon cottage hospitals and waiting lists for cancer patients rather than upon the poker schools of hospital porters assembled by the collective wisdom of governments and health authorities over the previous decade. The Government is cutting from necessity downwards instead of from judgment upwards; but most of the effect is felt in negative public relations. Actual spending goes up while marks are collected for hard-heartedness. We are going to have inflation again unless we raise interest rates or taxes. And in a self-indulgent party, restless with discipline, either move—

especially the latter and wiser one—will prove explosive.

On top of all this we have the Prime Minister's personal problem—her foolish and unlovable son Mark, who helped obtain a contract for a company in the Arab sheikhdom of Oman during his mother's visit to that country on quite other business. Things are not helped by the company concerned, Cementation, being run by Victor Matthews, who as Mrs Thatcher's uncritical booster in his other role as Chairman of the *Express* newspapers, won himself a peerage from the lady. Nothing improper has to have taken place, almost certainly nothing improper has taken place. But Mrs Thatcher, allegedly on the advice of her Press Secretary, Bernard Inghams, has refused to defend herself. Accordingly the story has run and run, leaving innuendo and embarrassment behind. Nothing whatever should attach to Mrs Thatcher herself, but she may well have been a little unwise in her choice of offspring.

*Nor is this all* . . . an edict, no, a *ukase* is issued to workers at the Intelligence centre—GCHQ Cheltenham—forbidding membership in a trade union. Now until that moment the Government's handling of the trade unions had been so skilful as to reduce their leadership to garment-rending despair. All emphasis had been put upon the civil rights of union members and upon the uncontroversial right of injured employers to sue for damages. Rope had been rolled out and one union, the National Graphical Association, had duly secured it to a stout beam and, shouting "Follow me!", had jumped off a ladder with the ligature quietly secure about its neck.

But the Government had done no forbidding, no coercing, no bullying. It had required the unions to abide by the civil law above which they had previously held privileges, and had subtly undermined an already vastly unpopular body of men. One has only to listen to the evolution of the publicly expressed ideas of the General Secretary of the Trade Union Congress, that very highly intelligent man, Len Murray, to see the extent of trade-union acceptance of their own position of weakness. Now, with a flick of the wrist, the British trade-union movement has been given a good brave cause, and has been united with supporters of those human rights which it had shown a disposition to roll on. Imagine a film in which the Lee Marvin character gets the girl in the last reel and you have a measure of governmental ineptitude in handling Cheltenham GCHQ.

THIS INTELLIGENCE OFFICE is, of course, exceedingly important: and its efficient, full-time manning without strikes is certainly essential. But the unions acknowledge this. They have declared themselves ready to accept a "no-strike deal", indeed to meet all government concerns about security. "We are as interested in security as the Government", they say, "but don't bully us and don't curdle the bullying with the insult of a bribe." Which, as is well known, is what the government has done. It is forbidden (perhaps *verboden* would sound better) any longer to belong to a trade union at GCHQ, but a bounty of £1,000 is available to those renouncing membership. It is a stunningly offensive approach, compounded in equal measure of authoritarianism and a sort of pecuniary arrogance, a cash-contempt.

The whole manoeuvre is a little easier to understand when one recalls that it has been, from Alpha to Omega (and Omega is the word), in the hands of the Foreign Office. In its domestic

dealing the F.O. is about as subtle as the Albert Memorial and, along with the ideologised cache of leftists who got it one bad name but who are now part of history, it incorporates an essentially undemocratic cast of mind, happy with foreign dictators and not sufficiently rooted in the soil of England to understand free institutions.

The F.O. is also notorious in its contempt for other departments. The Department of Employment, which has in recent years built up a brilliant reputation, on the principle of *festina lente*, for the skilled and civil sapping of its opponents and for the nicest regard for the law, *was not informed*. It was not given the courtesy of a ceremonial consultation, yet the Employment Minister, Thomas King, is obliged to make a public defence of a folly from the men in feathered hats which his own officials would have trashed in draft.

The combination of the Foreign Office on its high horse and Mrs Thatcher on hers makes for a cavalry charge in the wrong direction. And there is every indication that the Falklands Factor is in the process of being replaced by the Balaclava Factor, that being the battle at which the Light Brigade did their famous thing. It takes real dedication and singularity of purpose to bring the British trade unions into good repute and stir up anti-Americanism in a single move (pressure from the Yanks about British security laxness being the suspicion). Yet with the relevant trade-union leader, the conspicuously moderate Alistair Graham, coolly fighting back, and with the word going round (helped on its way on radio by that embarrassing man US General George Keagan) that the Americans had a hand in the decision, nobody can have taken more pleasure from the events than CND.

ONE DESPAIRS QUIETLY of official policy. The objective should be one of free association with an ally while showing the imagination to appreciate his motives in parts of the world physically remote from us. The present Government, in fits of alternate huffiness and compliance, looks to have done the precise opposite: squabbling with the Americans for the sake of the rhinestone sparkle of our "Commonwealth role" in Grenada and, by the appearances of it, snapping sharply to heel on a question of sophisticated domestic concern. We provide GCHQ. It is valuable to the Americans. We should be handling the security aspect on its merits—not by a peremptory, undemocratic, arguably illegal order, sugared over with a bribe. Posturing one week, we manage to be prideless the next; and terrible it looks.

Stuck as they are stuck, having issued their order, the Government, at the time of my writing, had a choice between slogging remorselessly on down the obtuse tunnel of coercion which they had entered, or cutting their losses and acknowledging a mistake which a short period of time would soon cover. (Ironically, they could now negotiate terms with Mr Graham's union to get both sides off their hooks, less expensive and less prolonged precisely because of that initial error.) But my own wager is that in this Prime Minister we have a lady who bets, not her shirt, but her face.

If the legal foundation for the order is inadequate—and it

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rests on the perversion of an unrelated rule applying to Civil Servants required by their contracts to accept job mobility—new legislation will have to be found. This one could bleed for months to the great joy of the enemies of the Government and of the US Administration. And if the Americans *are* involved, even those with small regard for the unions or for the Left, will be tempted to ask, “Please may we have our sovereignty back?”

**C**RASSNESS WAS NOT, however, confined to Cheltenham. In Northern Ireland Sir James Hennessy’s report on the mass escape from the Maze prison, while in the highest British traditions it let the sword fall upon subordinates—the Governor, Mr Ernest Whittington, and his staff—provided ample between-the-lines evidence of the culpability of both the Minister in charge of prisons, Nicholas Scott, and, if ministerial responsibility is worth more than mechanical devotion, the Northern Ireland Secretary, James Prior.

Discipline and morale were down at the prison from which a swarm of convicted murderers escaped because, in the words of an unprecedented protest from Ulster’s Prison Governors Association, Ministers had demanded favourable treatment, including work in prison, which made close supervision very much harder. There had been especial concern that therapeutic employment be found for Brendan McFarlane, and it was he who was to be the organiser of the extraordinary escape.

The resignation of Scott and Prior has not taken place, and their protests of non-culpability have mixed whining with arrogance to a degree not surprising in men heavily inclined to self-pity. Prior in particular reminds me of the last Obrenovic King of Serbia, Alexander III. The officer corps, finding this man an embarrassment, decided in 1903 to dismiss him. They did so in a manner more Czech than Serbian by throwing him from a third-floor window. Alexander, who had weak legs and overdeveloped shoulders, declined to do the gentlemanly thing and clung on desperately to the balcony. This was quite embarrassing to the officers of the coup, one of whom solved the problem administratively with a sabre-cut which sliced through poor Alexander’s fingers.

Jim Prior—weak legs and overdeveloped shoulders also—will suffer no such swift Balkan measures. He has, by any historical estimate, responsibility for a dreadful error which will cost the lives of innocent people; but untroubled by the loss of dignity he will cling on, and Mrs Thatcher will hesitate to remove a man whose claim on Government is his opposition to it.

**T**HUS THE WHOLE SCENARIO back at the Downing Street ranch is far from brilliant. No desperate ruin is at hand, but things are going wrong. There is a drift. And the Prime Minister’s own public style has deteriorated. Her performance in January on *Weekend World*, an important Sunday-noon current-affairs TV programme, was a mixture of inchoate policy and pulpit-hammering insistence which suggested almost any quality except quiet strength.

It is as if the Government, having won a stunning electoral victory in June ’83 and seeing the Labour Opposition deep in the water under the new captaincy of a romantic adolescent from the Verbose Tendency, had decided to even things up. They have made politics more exciting by a spot of constructive maladroitness.

One would have liked to think that the Government was still serious, that its vehement concern to deal with inflation was still part of the platform. Yet, as one Minister remarked privately within three weeks of the June electoral victory, the sums do not add up; expenditure has the Administration on the ropes, and they do not know how to deal with it. The harsh measures aimed at public service payrolls (which should have been taken long ago) have been made impossible largely by the unemployment which the government itself snowballed long since with a dear pound and ridiculous interest rates. We not only have unemployment; we have the wrong unemployment. And the scandal of Local-Government and Health-Service manpower mountains cannot now be faced. The Tories are locked into exponentially-rising public expenditure, and they know it.

Mrs Thatcher travels more these days. The flood of worrying and questing notes to Ministers has slowed down. She seems to have settled for being photographed at airports and being called a world stateswoman. The great irrelevance of foreign affairs has become her escape route from unsolved problems. One understands, but it is very sad.

### *Letter from Paris*

## Jean-François Revel’s Realism

*By François Fejtö*

Paris



**J**EAN-FRANÇOIS REVEL’S recent book focuses on one of the most urgent questions of the present time: must the democracies accept war in order to escape from servitude, or accept servitude in order to escape from war? Revel believes that the Western democracies still have the time and the opportunity to avoid both horns of the dilemma. If this attitude is equated with a

return to the “cold war”, then so be it . . . if the alternative of

<sup>1</sup> *Comment les démocraties finissent* (Grasset, Paris, 1983).

*détente* really means supine resignation to Soviet expansion through the renunciation of both strategic deterrence and effective economic sanctions. As for the Soviets, they have never made any secret of their view that *détente* did not spell any kind of cease-fire in the ideological warfare which goes hand in glove with the totalitarian system. As for the Western Communist parties—orthodox, Euro-Communist, or whatever—they have continued to fulfil their mission of supporting the foreign policy of the USSR and infiltrating democratic institutions. In the words of Revel:

“You have only to observe the confident skill with which the French Communist Party has exploited its presence in government since 1981 to take hold of the levers of power in civil administration, commerce, and the media, and above all to move France slowly but surely towards economic isolationism by hitting at the European Community, thus realising one of Moscow’s most long-standing designs. . . .”

Of course Soviet foreign policy has not always held the upper hand, and there have been Communist setbacks and retreats; but the great paradox of Russian communism lies in the way the system continues to thrive in spite of all its failings, both internal and external. “The longer communism lasts”, Revel is convinced, “the more expansionist it becomes.” Similarly, the longer it lasts, the more its military power keeps growing, to the point where Communist imperialism has become the principal problem of our time. Does that mean that the Soviet Union wants war? No, argues Revel, because the system would become dangerously fragile in the event of war. Rather than “military solutions”, the Soviets prefer a cautious advance towards world hegemony, with the help of bluff, intimidation, subversion, and a near-masterly exploitation of Western weaknesses. At present the Soviets are doing their utmost to conserve their nuclear superiority over Western Europe, enabling them to keep up the diplomatic pressure there without being dragged into a general war, while they gradually achieve their goal of a US military disengagement from the continent of Europe. For Revel, the Soviet superiority is not only military and nuclear, it is also diplomatic. His book contains a whole compendium of Western diplomatic errors, compared with Soviet successes, since the end of the Second World War, yet his conclusion is not altogether pessimistic.

REVEL: Actually, I think that it is still possible to correct the situation. The aim must be to make the Soviets understand that the continuation, or resumption, of negotiations on any subject whatsoever presupposes as a prior and irrevocable condition a clear cessation of Communist imperialism wherever it may be. Totalitarian régimes are very vulnerable once you understand the principle on which they operate. I have no doubts about the falsehood of the theory on which the West has been working for the last twenty years or so—namely that preliminary concessions, generous economic agreements, recognising the legitimacy of the satellite status of the countries of Eastern Europe, were all likely to placate the USSR, which was thought to suffer from an “insecurity complex.” This theory has been proved wrong; and it has produced the very opposite effect of giving a tremendous fillip to the USSR’s expansionist ambitions.

*—In the meantime the balance of military power has been changing, and not in the West’s favour.*

REVEL: In the logic of deterrence, that point is fundamental. Right now we are negotiating from a position of weakness, or at any rate from a position which on principle we are obliged to judge weak, since it is the function of diplomacy to be cautious. In one sense the USSR has won this particular game, because the terms of negotiation are no longer what they were only a few years ago.

*—You lay particular stress on the vulnerability of the Western mass media to Communist indoctrination campaigns.*

REVEL: The fact that in democratic societies there is a pluralist information system constitutes a crucial edge in favour of the Russians. Our own extremely diversified system of information is inevitably corruptible—after all, where there is no corruption there is also no freedom. Corruption is a by-product of freedom. I don’t say that there is no corruption in the Soviet Union, but it isn’t the same. The appetite for novelty, the fact that the Western information media owe it to themselves to take something of an oppositional line (even when they support the government, they have to keep a certain critical distance if they want to be credible)—and then, on top of that, the need to beat the competition, to come up with more scoops and so forth, all this makes the professional information media in our society extremely easy to manipulate. Take one well-known example: there were several thousand Western TV and newspaper correspondents in Indo-China during the Viet Nam war. They all believed that the Vietcong guerrillas were a “genuine expression” of South Vietnamese society, and belonged to that society, whereas we know now that they were an alien resistance, intervening from the north. The second example is what is going on at this very moment in Central America. Take Nicaragua, and all this talk about a “Somozista counter-revolution.” Well, Somoza is dead; and what people forget to point out is that a good many of the rebels are disillusioned former Sandinistas (including the famous guerrilla commander, Eden Pastora) or else they are former Social Democrats or Christian Democrats who were shoulder to shoulder against Somoza in the old days. There is, undeniably, aid coming in for these rebel guerrillas from the US government. Few are for it, almost all against—including *Time* magazine and a powerful committee of the House of Representatives. So we have democracy going out of its way to inhibit democracy’s own power to retaliate.

At the same time the all-knowing Western press puts on a sceptical air when there are reports of Cuban aid for the left-wing guerrillas in El Salvador. It claims that the Salvadorian elections were a “sham”, which I believe is totally mistaken. The country is no bigger than half a French *département*, and there were some two thousand watchful foreign observers. In any case, rigged elections are usually won by the government in power—and that didn’t happen at all in El Salvador! It all goes to show the unbelievable gullibility of the West.

**A**NOTHER SETBACK FOR THE WEST has been its loss of influence (and the corresponding Soviet and Cuban gains) in the non-aligned movement. Shouldn't the cases of Cambodia, Afghanistan, and Poland have given second thoughts to any countries which were jealous of their own independence?

REVEL: In fact Moscow could be well satisfied with the 1983 New Delhi conference, which was dominated by its friends. It is obviously the oligarchs of the Third World who are happy with this shift in favour of the Soviets, rather than the people, who have after all no chance to speak. One of the greatest political and human swindles of the last ten years has been the sight of these *socialisant* Third World dictators gagging the people who are under their thumb and posing as "defenders of the poor", when all they really want is personal power, both domestically and in foreign affairs.

—Which doesn't prevent leading intellectuals of the West making themselves the "spokesmen" for Third-Worldism. The Paris press published an impressive list of writers who had signed a statement condemning the "war waged by the United States against the people and government of Nicaragua"—Gabriel García Márquez, Carlos Fuentes, Julio Cortázar, Günter Grass, Heinrich Böll, Graham Greene, and William Styron. Do you think that these literary men are simply unaware of what we know about the way the Nicaraguan revolution has been hijacked by those who want to turn the country into a second Cuba?

REVEL: Let's analyse these names. In my view, William Styron is a political innocent and a total ignoramus. Márquez is a loyal representative of international communism, as Pablo Neruda was. He had the nerve to write that the Vietnamese "Boat People" were actually "capitalists" who were trying to export capital! I very much hope that I'll get the chance one day to ask Carlos Fuentes one question. I know Fuentes, and what I want to ask him is how and why the government of bandits who now run his Mexico have managed to ruin the country which has the best agriculture in Latin America, on top of its immense oil resources and other advantages. Might he not do better to mend his own house first? Perhaps he could also find out just how Lopez Portillo, the Mexican president who appointed him Ambassador to Paris, managed to retire with half a billion dollars at the end of his presidency.

—You mention Mitterrand (alongside Reagan, Mrs Thatcher and Craxi) as one of the figures who are going against the current of appeasement. Your judgment on de Gaulle was very severe—is Mitterrand, then, more far-sighted than de Gaulle?

REVEL: I do think that it isn't the first time that socialists have turned out to have a clearer understanding than some conservatives when it comes to the hard phenomenon of Communist totalitarian imperialism. I also believe that Felipe Gonzalez and Craxi have an almost physical sense of the Communist danger, which someone like Valéry Giscard d'Estaing never had. As a good politician, Mitterrand soon realised the strength of the anti-Soviet feeling in France and Western

Europe towards the end of 1980 (after the invasion of Afghanistan and the crisis in Poland).

—But the majority of the Socialist International in Europe is not following Mitterrand's lead. The Socialist International has never appeared so vulnerable to Soviet influence as it is today. How is it that Willy Brandt, Olof Palme, and often Bruno Kreisky are behaving, to all intents and purposes, like fellow-travellers?

REVEL: What absolutely appalled me when I was in Central America in 1982 was the communiqué issued by the Socialist International (meeting in Bonn), which claimed that the elections in El Salvador were "rigged." That meant a total endorsement of the Soviet-Cuban line. We shouldn't underestimate the Kremlin: I believe that one of the greatest successes of the international Communist movement under Brezhnev's leadership was the patient penetration of the Socialist International which has been going on for the last ten years. At any rate it proves how very clever the Soviet strategy really is: as soon as they realised that their image as a "socialist paradise" had folded up, they played the Third World card. That enabled them to recover many of their ex-fellow-travellers and sympathisers . . . with the argument that "the peasants of Central America must not be left to starve."

—Last year there was a report in "Le Monde" about a very shocking case which involved a Chinese woman who had asked for political asylum in Tokyo. The Americans refused her admission, and the Japanese (even though they have ratified the UN Convention on Refugees) simply handed her back to the Chinese.

REVEL: That is, for me, a perfect illustration of our own cowardice. It's the same calculation that we made about the USSR for all those *détente* years—grant them concessions, and then they'll be nice to us. Japan is using the same arithmetic with China. The Japanese imagine that if they pander to China by returning a single victim, then the Chinese will be friends. But it's the other way round: next time they'll ask for even more. Our leaders seem to have no idea of the strategy and tactics of totalitarian countries. They also fail to understand how vulnerable those countries are to propaganda, since they are based on ideologies. That is why Bukovsky, Solzhenitsyn, and Zinoviev have effectively "deterred" the Soviet Union far more than Giscard d'Estaing, Helmut Schmidt, and Jimmy Carter combined.

—You say in your book that to improve the chances of the West it would require "une véritable reconversion intellectuelle." Don't you think the reconversion is taking too long to happen?

REVEL: On the level of action, perhaps it is rather late in the day; all the same, I do believe that the intellectual reconversion is under way. It's true that some people still keep calling President Reagan a "fascist" merely because he says that the West should be at least as well armed as the USSR. But in general the realistic understanding of the USSR and resistance to Soviet imperialism has slowly but sympathetically progressed.

## Fearing the Bomb

# The Naked Emperor

By Norman Moss



THE WORLD in which nuclear weapons are the subject of plans and contingencies is partly a world of make-believe and guesswork. As in algebra, calculations are made with unknown quantities, so that the result may be an answer that gives an appearance of precision, but has at its centre an unknown, or several unknowns. For instance, figures of the explosive yield of warheads, and of missile accuracy, are put forward with confidence and accepted un-

questioningly, and the balance of forces is calculated and war plans are made on their basis. These confident assertions contain no hint that few of the warheads have ever been tested, and none at all has been tested above ground since the test ban treaty was signed in 1963; or that no ICBM has ever been fired over the Polar route which would be the firing path of most ICBMs between America and Russia, and where the North Magnetic Pole could affect the firing mechanism. Nor that no one has ever exploded more than one warhead at a time, or launched more than one missile at a time, or in any way duplicated the conditions of a nuclear strike. But all these uncertain figures are added, subtracted, multiplied, and permuted; and these mathematical operations are performed skilfully and accurately, so that the uncertainty of the original figures is forgotten, and we have a make-believe precision.

Two recent publications show that there is also more make-believe and less of the hard stuff of reality in the area of strategic planning. The first is Desmond Ball's monograph *Targeting for Strategic Deterrence*.<sup>1</sup>

Ball, an Australian, is an academic strategist who has a high reputation in the field, and has been a consultant on a major Pentagon study of tactical nuclear weapons. He examined the evolution of nuclear-weapon target lists over many years—and a surprising amount of material on this is now available in unclassified documents. During these years, the official American strategic policy changed several times: from "massive retaliation" to "counterforce"—the short-lived policy, developed during the early 1960s, of concentrating an initial nuclear strike on an enemy's force and deliberately sparing population centres—and from "mutual assured destruction" to "flexible response."

The conclusion that emerges is that these supposed changes

in policy were hardly reflected at all in the targeting plans. A new strategic doctrine would be worked out laboriously and debated extensively, and then adopted. But the list of targets to be attacked if war came would not alter as a result. The strategies enunciated in the White House and the higher reaches of the Pentagon were one thing; the orders given to bomber bases and missile silos, apparently, were quite another.

For instance, writing about the shift in the mid-1960s from "counterforce" to "assured destruction" (plus damage limitation, with a subsequent downgrading of damage limitation), Ball writes: "It is important to emphasise that these changes in US strategic policy related only to the declaratory and force posture aspects of that policy. . . . No substantive changes were made to the 1962 Sior." (Sior is the *Single Integrated Operational Plan*, the nuclear war plan.) "Posture" in this instance seems a particularly apt word.

On the shift in 1974, promulgated by the then Defence Secretary, James Schlesinger, from an emphasis on "assured destruction" back to the limited use of nuclear weapons for war-fighting, Ball writes: "This re-emphasis was, however, much more declarative than substantive since. . . . the Sior had, at least since 1962 and including the period when assured destruction was the avowed policy, contained most of these counterforce targets."

Ball found that when the target list was changed over the years, this was due not to a change in policy, but for two other reasons: more weapons became available, and more accurate weapons; and satellite observation improved America's knowledge of the Soviet Union. In other words, target lists are determined mostly by the availability of military hardware and by its capability, not by strategic doctrines and targeting philosophies. This is a conclusion that is humbling for the nuclear strategists.

THE OTHER PUBLICATION that bears on this theme is "The Military Role of Nuclear Weapons: Perceptions and Misperceptions", an article by Robert McNamara, who, as US Secretary of Defense, first brought the academic strategists into the Defense Department. The article appeared in the Fall 1983 issue of the quarterly *Foreign Affairs*, and in it McNamara argued (as he has elsewhere, recently) that NATO should adopt a policy of "no-first-use" of nuclear weapons. He dropped in two sentences which appear to shed new light on recent history.

When he was Defense Secretary under Presidents Kennedy and Johnson, he wrote, "I recommended to them, without qualification, that they never initiate, under any circumstances, the use of nuclear weapons. I believe they accepted my recommendations."

He could not be more explicit about what he was recommending. It was the policy of "no-first-use" that he is arguing for today. If Presidents Kennedy and Johnson did indeed accept his recommendation, and did not simply murmur some soothing words, this would mean that they based their intentions upon this policy. Yet they were declaring in public, and privately to their NATO allies, that the United States was committed to the opposite policy—that it was prepared to use nuclear weapons if necessary to repel a non-nuclear Soviet

<sup>1</sup> *Targeting for Strategic Deterrence*. By DESMOND BALL. Adelphi Paper No. 185. International Institute for Strategic Studies, £2.75.

attack. This is the policy to which the United States is committed today, and it is the bedrock on which the defensive alliance between the United States and the European NATO countries rests.

Small wonder that the French commentator Pierre Lelouch wrote about the McNamara article: "This means that for a number of years, at any rate, the Europeans' sense of security was based on an illusion." It is as if a trapeze artist, having finished his act, finds that the safety net was made of gossamer.

Small wonder, also, that it was a French commentator who made the point. For McNamara would seem to have confirmed the old Gaullist thesis that defensive alliances are worth very little where a nuclear threat is involved, that no American President could be relied on to risk a nuclear strike on American cities in defence of Western Europe, and that Europeans must therefore look to themselves for a credible deterrent force.

Nor is it only Western Europeans who were deceived, if what McNamara says is true. The Soviet bloc was deterred during those years, if it needed deterring, by a threat that was never going to be carried out.

Whatever plans are made in advance, no one knows for certain what the leader of a nuclear power would do if conflict began, not even the leader himself. Now it seems that the uncertainty was even greater than was realised. Once again, as in Desmond Ball's paper, we have an indication that the strategies of deterrence and war pronounced over the years may be less of a guide to what would actually happen than either governments or strategists would have us believe, or, probably, would have themselves believe.

Something of the same conclusion was reached by Professor Lawrence Freedman in his book *The Evolution of Nuclear Strategy* (1981). He too came to the conclusion, at the end of his lengthy survey, that the difference between one strategy of deterrence and another may be less crucial in deciding events in the real world than most strategists believe. "The Emperor has no clothes, but he is still the Emperor", he wrote in a telling phrase.

NATIONS ARE DETERRED by the stark fact of the destructive power of nuclear weapons more than by the meaning or credibility of the doctrines in which they are clothed. The arguments over strategy dwindle in significance. The Bomb itself, with its power to annihilate and destroy, is the Emperor. Like the grape in Omar Khayyam's *Rubaiyat*, it

*... can with logic absolute  
The two and seventy jarring sects confute.*

This is not to suggest that questions of deterrence and nuclear war plans should be left to chance, or even to the military. If we must live with nuclear weapons, we must carefully work out plans for their use as instruments of deterrence, and perhaps even as instruments of war, and we must devote our best efforts to this.

But it would be intellectual arrogance to expect too much of these efforts. The reality will always be huge uncertainty, and profound and soundly-based fear.

# Leonard Schapiro's Legacy

By Hugh Seton-Watson



LEONARD SCHAPIRO (who died in London in November 1982 at the age of 75), was an outstanding interpreter and teacher of the politics and history of Soviet Russia. His only equal in the Western world was his friend the late Merle Fainsod of the Russian Research Center in Harvard. Schapiro's book

*The Communist Party of the Soviet Union* (1960) and Fainsod's *How Russia Is Ruled* (1953) remain the essential foundation and reference source for all who seek understanding of this complex and important subject. As time passes, more and more facts accumulate which have to be sought elsewhere, but both books are likely for long years yet to be irreplaceable sources of basic understanding. But both men's contributions to learning and to public wisdom went far beyond the publication of these two brilliant works.

Leonard Schapiro came of a Russian Jewish family, and his father was active in Anglo-Russian trade based on Riga. Leonard was born in Glasgow in 1908, but his childhood was mostly spent in Riga or St Petersburg, where he experienced the Revolution, leaving Russia with his parents when he was twelve years old. His education was completed in Britain, at St Paul's and then at University College, London, where he graduated in law. He was bilingual in English and Russian, and thoroughly familiar with both cultures, acquiring also a good knowledge of the German, French, and Italian as well. He practised at the Bar from 1932 to 1939, and after government service in the War and in post-War Germany returned to the Bar from 1946 to 1955. Increasingly his interest in the Soviet Union, on which he published articles and lectured to various audiences, became his main intellectual concern; and in 1955 he was appointed a lecturer in the Government department at the London School of Economics, and promoted to professor in 1963.

Looking at Leonard's career as a whole, one can call him a lawyer, an historian, and a man of letters. Law, History, and Literature are of course distinct subjects, but they overlap with each other, and each depends on the others. Leonard was incapable of seeing them as rigidly separated "disciplines", their frontiers guarded by sentinels belching forth *odium academicum*. None knew better than he that a lawyer who knows no history is a bad lawyer, and an historian who treats law as a minor by-product of economic-social *zakonomernosti* is a bad historian. As for literature, that of Russia is more intimately linked with history than any other great literature. Many of the great political and social controversies of post-Napoleonic Russia were conducted in works of imaginative literature, and

many fictional characters were used as ammunition in political disputes. Leonard Schapiro's last book was *Turgenev: His Life and Times* (1978), a sensitive study of a great writer who, being in some ways extremely European yet also essentially Russian, was especially sympathetic to him.

As an historian he took great pains to understand and to expound fairly the outlooks and actions of the various groups and persons. He was not himself a socialist, but in *The Origins of the Communist Autocracy* (1955) the beliefs and behaviour of Socialist Revolutionaries, Mensheviks and Bolsheviks, and of the conflicting factions within each of them, are set out *sine ira et studio* and with great clarity.

Though the Revolution of 1917 and the development of the Soviet régime were Leonard's speciality, he was also keenly interested in the whole history of Russia, and especially in the preceding half-century. The aspect of this period which chiefly concerned him was the evolution of Russian attitudes to the rule of law. As he saw it, the great divide between Russian statesmen was not so much between those who professed progressive European ideas and those who adhered to conservative traditions, as between those who respected the law and those who did not. This is the theme of the six lectures he gave at Yale in 1965, which were published as *Rationalism and Nationalism in Russian Nineteenth-century Political Thought*. The catchy rhyme of the title is rather misleading: the opposite pole to "rationalism" (or the craving for Western political blueprints) in Leonard Schapiro's treatment was not so much "nationalism"—or even *narodnost'*—as the mentality of autocracy and its servants, who would sweep away the written law whenever it suited them, confident as they were that they understood better than any scribbling lawyers what was best for Russians. In this the minds of Nicholas II and Lenin worked the same way. Leonard's book pays tribute to three men who understood this problem, and sought to reconcile tradition and liberty within a framework of respect for law, but who have been treated, by those historians whose only criterion is success, as contemptible liberals or reactionaries: Granovsky, B. N. Chicherin, and especially the *zemstvo* leader, Shipov.

In Russia in the first decade of this century the concept of the *Rechtsstaat* undoubtedly gained increasing support, but this trend was reversed by the catastrophes of War and Revolution. Russian history to date displays, as Leonard Schapiro rightly argued, the protracted victory of autocracy—whether of Peter the Great, Nicholas I, Brezhnev, or others. In Leonard's own words:

"... the essence of the political system, autocracy, survives. The revolution from below, of February 1917, necessarily failed. The traditional Russian revolution from above succeeded in October 1917, and has been repeated at intervals since."

His own preferences were rather well summed up in the quotations on the title pages of his first two books—from St Augustine: *Remota itaque justitia quid sunt regna nisi magna latrocinia?*—and from Tocqueville: "He who seeks in Liberty anything other than Liberty itself is destined for servitude. . . ."

It is impossible to do justice within a short memoir to this many-sided, brilliantly perceptive and deeply humane man. A

full portrait would have to include his deep knowledge and love of music, and his appreciation of the arts. Much would also be said of his gifts as a teacher, of the affection which he inspired in his students, including those of different political persuasion. He was also a deeply religious man, conversant with both the Judaic and the Christian traditions but not wholly committed to any body of doctrine, seeking to work out his own faith, striving towards a level higher than politics, law, and history.

Being quite incapable of covering all these aspects, I will here confine myself to his treatment of one political and moral phenomenon which much preoccupied him—totalitarianism.

IN THE 1950s the word "totalitarianism" was widely misused by politicians and journalists to suggest that the régime of Stalin was barely distinguishable from that of Hitler. This silly argument was never used by Leonard Schapiro. It is quite different from the defensible proposition that the instruments of power and the way in which power was exercised under these two régimes were strikingly similar. Some academic writers constructed abstract theories of totalitarianism which were remote from real life. Inevitably, as more was learned about the Soviet system in the 1960s, and as travel to Russia and contacts with Soviet citizens became easier, these theories fell into disuse. The fashionable cliché was that "the totalitarian model" was now outmoded, and should be replaced by other "models."

But Leonard Schapiro never built "models": he studied reality. He never lent himself to "McCarthyite" rhetoric, and he was always impatient of over-ambitious theoretical struc-

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tures. The same is true of Merle Fainsod at Harvard. Both used the vocabulary of totalitarianism because it expressed some essential and specific features of the Soviet system.

The best known attempt at definition of totalitarianism is that of Carl J. Friedrich and Zbigniew Brzezinski. Their list of six essential features of totalitarian régimes has been useful to students of politics for almost thirty years. Nevertheless it is unsatisfactory, because it includes some features common to most modern governments—including Western democracies—and omits other basic features specific to governments of the type under consideration.

Leonard Schapiro's short book *Totalitarianism* (1972), written in clear English with no concessions to fashionable academic jargon, sums up the arguments, in the light of the history of Germany, Russia, Italy, and some other countries in the 20th century, and of his own unremitting study of the Soviet and East European régimes since Stalin died. This study continued also in the last ten years of his life, during which I often discussed these questions with him.

One important point which emerged from our discussions was the distinction between the *aims* of the rulers and the actual operation of the régimes which they created. Total power over the population was in fact never achieved. The interesting concept of the atomisation of society (theoretically elaborated by Hannah Arendt and others) was never completely achieved. It remains a useful concept, because it does describe the aim of the ruler, certainly of Stalin and his circle and, arguably, also of Hitler. But this atomisation—the situation in which every citizen is linked individually and vertically, as it were by a controlling wire, to the ruler's *apparat*, but has no independent horizontal links with others—was never fully effective. In reality for millions of citizens of the Soviet Union and the Third Reich the bonds of family, religion, nationality, and personal friendship survived the pressures of the régime. By now enough is known of hundreds of cases of individuals in both countries to make this clear. This is not, of course, to deny the ruthlessness or cruelty of both régimes, or their success in destroying all active opposition.

We may say, then, that totalitarianism existed, and still exists, as an aspiration of certain political minds and organisations, but was never put into effect as a complete working system. The aspiration to total power may perhaps be summarised, more succinctly than in the Friedrich-Brzezinski formula, as the concentration of all political, economic and spiritual power in the same hands, and the denial of any autonomy at all to the private life of the subject. It is the combination of all these things which constitutes the specific quality of totalitarianism, a phenomenon of the 20th century not seen in earlier periods.

The rather old-fashioned words "*spiritual power*" denote power over the whole range of intellectual, moral and religious concerns of the subject. The totalitarian ruler rejects all religion as such, but seeks to supply the emotional needs of the subject formerly covered by religion with what is in effect—though not in official parlance—an *ersatz*-religion: with all-embracing Marxist-Leninist science as interpreted by its exclusive and infallible exponents in the Central Committee of the CPSU, or with faith in the thousand-year Reich inaugurated by the *Führer* who infallibly embodies the destiny of

eternal Germany. Previous rulers did not claim total spiritual power. Philip II persecuted heretics on behalf of the Church, but did not himself formulate the Church's doctrine. Previous rulers made frequent demands on their subjects when they needed them, and at such times trampled on their private interests; but they did not seek to control their private lives all the time.

The "Third Reich" has long since disappeared, and Stalin has been dead for thirty years. But the claims to total power of the Soviet rulers have not been abandoned. What has happened is that power has come to be exercised more mildly, and that some claims are no longer enforced. The exclusive and all-embracing truth of Marxism-Leninism is still asserted, not only in the political and economic fields but also in literature and the arts; but in practice these latter are managed on a much looser rein. In the East European dependencies there is great variety. In Hungary private life is virtually untouched; and non-political writing, including history and some branches of the social sciences, is comparatively free. In Poland the Catholic Church has remained the principal spiritual force in the country, and its structural framework is stronger than ever.

THESE Milder trends and the much improved access of Western visitors to Communist-ruled countries, have led some Western specialists to conclude that Soviet-type régimes differ only in *degree*, not in *kind*, from Western régimes. Soviet officials, whether in a central ministry or a party regional committee (*obkom*), are faced with the same sort of decisions as American or West European administrators; and powerful bureaucracies "overshadow" the citizen in the West too, whether in the form of government departments or of jumbo-sized business firms. We should therefore, these specialists argue, put aside our ideological prejudices, and realise that government in the USSR is much the same sort of thing as government in the USA, and that we are all very much like each other.

With this fashionable combination of truisms, tautological propositions, and false conclusions Leonard Schapiro had no patience at all. Undeterred by the semantic subtleties of modern politological sophists he would point out, with the directness and simplicity of Hans Christian Andersen's child contemplating the naked emperor, that polities in which citizens cannot choose who shall rule them are profoundly different from polities in which they can; and that elections in which there is only one candidate for each office are not elections at all. He would also point out that there is a deep difference between compelling citizens to perform certain duties (and to refrain from certain actions defined by law), and telling citizens what they must do and say and think all day long.

The arguments within the Western academic world and Western public opinion on these themes will continue, with serious contributions from both sides and with plenty of sterile fanaticism as well, with academic pontiffs and media prophets accusing each other of "hawkishness" or "fellow-travelling." But Leonard Schapiro's voice, with its unique combination of learning, common sense, and wisdom, will no longer be heard. His fine books remain, and the vivid memories of his friends.

## Politics & World Affairs

### Life-Size Portraits of Two Giants

*On Ernest Bevin & J. M. Keynes—By DAVID MARQUAND*



AT A TIME WHEN OPINIONATED insensitivity passes for strength of character, and Radical or High Tory *chic* for intellectual daring, it is pleasant to be reminded that the genuine articles once flourished in our politics. Ernest Bevin and John Maynard Keynes could hardly have been more different in background or upbringing. While Keynes was climbing, with a kind of relentless

inevitability, up the Establishment's most gilded ladder—scholarship to Eton, election to Pop, scholarship to King's, election to the Apostles, appointment to the India Office, prize Fellowship at King's—Bevin was trailing around Bristol in a carter's van, gradually, almost unconsciously, ingesting the earthy, broad-visioned, tough-minded social democracy that guided him for the rest of his life. While Bevin was learning how to organise and lead the dockside proletariat, shouting down opponents, squaring up to bosses, elbowing aside rivals, Keynes was analysing probability, discovering the Russian ballet, and pursuing a frenzied series of homosexual love affairs.

Yet their similarities are more remarkable than their differences. Both were men of genius. Both had the even more precious gift of creativity. Both had the imagination and courage to defy the conventional wisdom, combined with the common sense to know that the conventional wisdom might sometimes be right. Both were supremely practical, out to solve problems rather than to validate theories. Above all, both breathed a sturdy, late-Victorian optimism. Both believed that generosity and intelligence could prevail over stupidity and selfishness, that Reason in alliance with Will could cure social evils and achieve social progress. Despite their party differences—Keynes a slightly fluctuating Liberal, Bevin a dominant influence on the Labour Party—both belonged unmistakably to the same tradition of piecemeal,

undoctrinaire reform. Each left a stamp on that tradition which is only now beginning to fade; and if its recent history and present state are to be understood, the contribution each made to it needs to be reassessed.

Each has been splendidly served by his latest biographer. With the publication of this volume, Alan Bullock's life of Bevin is complete. It is a mighty edifice, heroic in scale and depth. The first volume, on Bevin the trade-union leader, ran to 654 pages, and the second, on Bevin the wartime Minister of Labour, to 395. This one<sup>1</sup> contains 854 pages of text, covering only a little less than six years. Together, the three volumes paint an extraordinarily rich and variegated picture of personal and political growth—the growth of a man, interacting with the growth of a movement. Separately, each volume also recounts, in absorbing and compelling detail, a crucial chapter in 20th-century British history.

Thus, the first volume was both the story of the illegitimate, poverty-stricken West Country boy who fought his way to the leadership of Britain's strongest trade union, and the best account we have of the slow, painful, bitterly-contested evolution of the trade-union movement as a whole into an estate of the realm. The second interweaves the story of Bevin's fertile and commanding tenure of the Ministry of Labour with the story of the British war economy, which Bevin did more than any other single person to shape. This one is an affectionate, rounded, occasionally touching picture of Bevin at the apex of his career—breaking the ice at a stiff diplomatic dinner with a rendering of “Cockles & Mussels”; savaging an absent Winston Churchill during the debate on the repeal of the 1927 Trades Disputes Act (and hammering the dispatch box so hard that his spectacles flew off); fuelling himself with streams of brandy, whisky and champagne and ignoring the protests of “the old ticker”; reminding his private secretary to be sure to tip the hotel page-boy because “I was once a page-boy myself”; and ruminating his way to the heart of a problem, like (as one of his staff put it) “an elephant twitching and pawing the ground during the night.” It is also a masterly study of British foreign policy under the last British Foreign Secretary who really mattered in world affairs and—through that—of the astonishing series of improvisations which created the international order in which we still live today.

The whole trilogy is marvellous history—meticulous, authoritative and imbued with a robust horse-sense reminiscent of

<sup>1</sup> *Ernest Bevin: Foreign Secretary 1945–51*. By ALAN BULLOCK. Heinemann, £30.00.

Bevin's own. Like all historians, Bullock has had to select and, in selecting, to give order and shape to a disordered, shapeless reality. But he has a sense of reality that many historians lack. He knows that order is retrospective and therefore dangerous; that events do not come in neat, easily-opened packages, but in great, messy blobs that spill over into each other. He captures the muddle and clutter in which policy is made—the fog of confusion and uncertainty which envelopes the policy-makers; the fluctuating mixture of imperfect knowledge, dubious guesswork and inspired intuition on which they have to rely; the laborious, haphazard processes through which they try to translate their policies into action. As a result, we see the episodes he describes through the eyes of those who took part in them; and we see the participants not, as so often happens, as marionettes dancing on the historian's string, but as creatures of flesh and blood, groping in the dark and hoping for the best.

More surprisingly, perhaps, it is also marvellous biography. Bevin left no diary, no intimate letters, no tremulous old ladies with memories of distant love affairs, no echoes of long-buried scandals, indeed no evidence of any kind about anything that could be called a private life. Bullock has turned this handicap into an asset. Through it, he has escaped the malign shadows of Freud and Lytton Strachey. He spares us the keyhole gossip and amateur psychologising that trivialise so many biographies, and proceeds on the refreshing basis that men of action realise themselves in action. Lacking evidence about the private Bevin—who would almost certainly have turned out to be a figure of monumental insignificance if such evidence had been found—he concentrates on the public Bevin, who really mattered. The result is a wonderfully fresh and authentic picture of one of the most creative men of his time, engaged in the business of creation—pushing, bullying, cajoling, dominating, persuading, trading through the endless, dreary committees and occasional angry meetings which were his raw material.

THE PICTURE is built up, like a mosaic, from masses of detail; and no brief summary can possibly do justice to it. All the same, one or two themes emerge, each of enduring significance.

The first is the theme of interdependence, of partnership, in the deepest sense of power-sharing. On one level, it must be admitted, that description is so paradoxical as to be almost perverse. Whatever else he may have been, Bevin was not, in his own career, a power-sharer. On the contrary, he was a power-hogger, ruthlessly and sometimes brutally expanding the frontiers of whatever empire he happened to rule, until he came up against another empire which was too strong for him to fight. The Transport & General Workers' Union, which is his most enduring monument, was not a planned structure, designed to achieve a defined purpose. It was an octopoid growth, reaching out wherever there were members to be won, a kind of conglomerate of the working-class movement, with no organising principle save the will and appetite of its founder. The wartime Ministry of Labour never quite became the TGWU of Whitehall, but—on Bullock's showing at any rate—

one cannot help suspecting that, if the War had lasted another six years, it would have come close to doing so.

Nor, for that matter, does the theme of power-sharing square easily with Bevin's treatment of opponents. As Bullock points out, his instinct when confronted with opposition was to "flatten" it. Even that, I suspect, may be a coy way of putting it. The truth, surely, is that Bevin loathed and detested opposition, and did his best, not merely to flatten, but to expunge it. On such occasions, the ruminating elephant remembered by his staff became a wild, roaring, warrior elephant, mercilessly trampling down anything and anybody standing in its way. Indeed, if I have any criticism of Bullock, it is that he does not paint this side of Bevin in quite the gory colours it deserves. We get, so to speak, the mahout's eye view, the view from the top of the elephant's head. We do not get the view from under its feet—the view of a George Lansbury, for example, brutally savaged for his pacifism, or of a Dick Crossman, accused of stabbing his Government in the back because he had the temerity to speak for himself over foreign affairs.

But although Bevin loved power, amassed power and hoarded power, he knew, on a much deeper level, that in the complex, interdependent society in which he lived, and which his own actions were making more complex and more interdependent, power-sharing was the price of survival. Like the contemporary business tycoons who were building up the amalgamations with which he negotiated, he realised instinctively that the old, 19th-century world of perfect competition had vanished; and that the great combinations of Capital and Labour which had destroyed it would have to share power with each other and the state, or drag society down in a Hobbesian war of all against all. Like all really good negotiators, moreover, he also realised instinctively that the point of negotiation is not to defeat the other side, but to find a common interest with it, so that the whole notion of victory and defeat will seem obsolete.

As a raw, young trade-union organiser in pre-1914 Bristol, as Bullock tells us, one of his first actions, after organising the carters, was to organise their employers, so that he could persuade them to set up an Arbitration Board to regulate future disputes. That was the *leitmotiv* of his career, not only as trade-union leader, but as Minister of Labour and Foreign Secretary as well. *Organise, negotiate, compromise*. If possible, create a structure which will make it easier to negotiate and compromise in future. If necessary, even create the structure which you will face across the negotiating table. That was the Bristol story in a nutshell. It was also the story of the "Triple Alliance" of miners, railwaymen, and transport workers in the early 1920s, of the Mond-Turner talks between the TUC and the employers which followed the General Strike, of the OEEC two years after the War, and of the North Atlantic Treaty two years after that. Interdependence and power-sharing within a society, in short, complemented by interdependence and power-sharing between societies.

THIS IS WHERE the second theme—the theme of solidarity or group loyalty—interacts with the first. Bevin's ruthless ways with opponents sprang, no doubt, from the depths of his

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character. But they also reflected his experiences as an organiser and negotiator, and were implicit in the ethic which made those experiences possible. Successful negotiation demands discipline; and the best kind of discipline is self-discipline. The union members must come out when the negotiator judges that it is time for a strike. They must go back when he decides that he has made the best deal he can get. They cannot be forced, but they can be led; and leadership depends on loyalty. There is no room for the free-wheeling conscience, the sacred heart of Protestant individualism and all the varieties of liberalism that derive from Protestant individualism. "The plural of conscience", Arthur Henderson is supposed to have said, "is conspiracy." Bevin did not phrase the doctrine as epigrammatically, but he practised it even more strenuously. The Union was bigger than the member, the Movement than the individual. Those who forgot that—the Mosleys, the Ramsay MacDonalds, the Stafford Crippses, the Kingsley Martins, the Richard Crossmans—were untrustworthy at best and treacherous at worst.

It was a hard, rough, very masculine ethic, not unlike the public-school ethic of the Foreign Office officials with whom Bevin established what seems at first sight an extraordinary *rapprochement*. But Bullock makes it abundantly clear that it was Bevin's ethic. It was, of course, a convenient ethic from his point of view. Since he controlled the biggest of the big battalions which determined what the majority decision would be, an ethic extolling loyalty to majority decisions had no terrors for him. I doubt, however, if that is the whole story, or even an important part of it. Bevin did not merely preach the ethic of group loyalty, he lived it; and he lived it because it was in his blood. For him it was the key, the only conceivable key, to the success of the Movement, which was the only conceivable vehicle for the rise of his class.

In this, he was right. Group loyalty *was* the key, not perhaps to the rise of the working class, but certainly to the rise of the working-class movement. As such, it was also the key to the emergence of the interdependent society, which the rise of the working-class movement helped to bring about. Yet there is a paradox here, of which Bevin and his contemporaries were not conscious. The ethic of group loyalty, which is fundamental to the interdependent, power-sharing society which they created, runs counter to—or is, at any rate, in acute tension with—the ethic of individual freedom and self-realisation, which is central to that same society's political values and perhaps also to its economic needs. In Bevin's day, the problems raised by that paradox seemed remote and academic, of no concern to practical men. They have loomed larger and larger since his death. How do you square group power with the right to dissent, the need for a consensus between Capital and Labour with the need for industrial flexibility, corporatist power-sharing with parliamentary government? These are the questions for the Bevins of the 1980s and '90s. The present sad state of the reforming tradition is eloquent testimony to the fact that no new Bevin has yet come forward to answer them.



IT TESTIFIES EVEN MORE ELOQUENTLY to the absence of a new Keynes. The first volume of Robert Skidelsky's biography<sup>2</sup> does not deal directly with Keynesian economics. Like Bullock, he has built on a heroic scale. The volume runs to 400 pages, and ends with the publication of *The Economic Consequences of the Peace*, when Keynes was 37. The 26 years which are still to come include those in which Keynes revolutionised economic theory, converted the

Treasury, played a central part in establishing the post-War international monetary system, and negotiated the American loan—not to speak, of course, of inspiring Lloyd George's 1929 election programme, writing some of the best polemical journalism of the century, and making a fortune. Though Skidelsky protests that another volume will suffice, it seems to me that he does so with an air of desperation; and I hope and believe that he will change his mind. This shows every sign of being one of the great biographies of our generation. Having started it heroically, it would be madness to deny it an heroic conclusion.

Unlike Bullock, however, Skidelsky has uncovered huge floods of evidence about his subject's private life. In places, he has allowed it to overwhelm him; but it is easy to see why. As every schoolboy now knows, Keynes was not merely a homosexual in these years—when homosexuality was, of course, illegal, and therefore a subject for blackmail as well as for persecution and discrimination of all kinds—but an extremely randy, highly-sexed and, by the standards of the time at any rate, open homosexual. Roy Harrod's official biography concealed this; and, for that reason alone, Skidelsky was right to discuss it at length. But there is more to it than that. At this stage in his career, Keynes's homosexuality clearly played an absolutely crucial part, not just in his way of life, but in his attitudes, values, and view of the world.

The coterie culture in which he spent his late adolescence and early manhood was, as Skidelsky shows, a homosexual culture—a culture in which homosexuality was not only accepted, but regarded as the norm. It was also the culture of Moore's *Principia Ethica* and the doctrine that morality is a matter of states of mind rather than of actions. There is, of course, no logical connection between that doctrine and any particular sexual orientation. All the same, it is hard to escape the conclusion that, for Keynes and his Cambridge friends, there was a strong psychological connection. Moore taught, or at least implied, that the ambitions and values of ordinary humanity were immoral as well as ugly and distasteful: indeed, that they were immoral because they were ugly and distasteful. As Keynes himself half recognised thirty years later, that teaching was in any case likely to promote a kind of moral narcissism, in which the contemplation of truth, beauty and goodness within a charmed circle went hand in hand with a mixture of fear and contempt for the vulgar herd outside. For

<sup>2</sup> John Maynard Keynes, 1883–1920: *Hopes Betrayed*. By ROBERT SKIDELSKY. Macmillan London, £12.95. To be published in the US by Viking Press.

homosexuals, in danger of persecution by the herd, and searching for a charmed circle in which they could escape from it, the teaching was particularly attractive and its consequences particularly narcissistic. The result was the intense, febrile, curiously bloodless atmosphere with which the endless histories of Bloomsbury (which are the British intelligentsia's equivalent of books on gardening) have made us so familiar. And that was the atmosphere in which Keynes spent the part of his life that mattered most to him for at least fifteen and perhaps twenty years.

SKIDELSKY DESCRIBES IT with beautiful precision and skill. He does not mock, or jibe, or sneer. Nor does he apologise or excuse. Patiently and sympathetically, he breathes life into dead controversies and recreates a vanished world. At first, I must admit, I thought he was taking it all too seriously. *Pace* Michael Holroyd and the other Bloomsburyists, the world of the Duncan Grants, Lytton Strachey and Clive Bell who populate these pages is of interest only because Keynes once inhabited it. It has little intrinsic interest of its own; and I could not help feeling that its topography did not deserve all the loving care that Skidelsky lavishes on it.

By the end of the book, I saw that I was wrong. For there is a puzzle about Keynes, which Harrod's biography did not solve. He was a highly successful, highly privileged junior member of the Establishment—a Fellow of King's, a brilliant exponent of

the orthodox Marshallian economics in which he had been brought up, a superbly competent Treasury official during the First World War, a rich Stock Exchange speculator after it. Yet he was also a devastating critic of the Establishment—showing (in *The Economic Consequences of the Peace*) that the promises with which it had justified the killing of millions of young men were lies, and (in *The General Theory*) that its most deeply held values were economic bunkum. How could the same man be both of these things at once?

Thanks to the care with which he sketches in the background, Skidelsky solves the puzzle and brings the two halves of Keynes's life together. Keynes, he shows, was not a true member of the Establishment after all. He merely took its shilling and wore its coat. Emotionally, he was always an outsider, with outsider values and outsider loyalties. Before 1914, he imagined that he could spend his life in a Mooreite charmed circle, free of obligations to the society around him. But the War and its aftermath smashed the barriers behind which the charmed lives had been led. He was in society now, whether he liked it or not; and he had to choose between true membership of the Establishment and rebellion. For a while, he was torn—more, perhaps, than Skidelsky is willing to admit. But because he was an emotional outsider, he chose rebellion in the end. The passion and verve of *The Economic Consequences of the Peace* are the passion and verve of a disguised outsider, ripping off his disguise.

Edwardian Cambridge was a far cry from Bevin's Bristol. It was not quite such a far cry as it appears at first sight.

# Measuring Military Power

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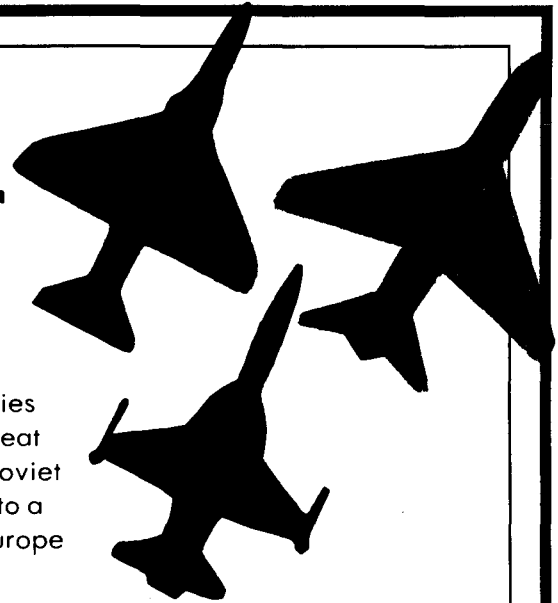
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# Arguing World Politics

## *Lord Vaizey's Peace*—By MAX BELOFF



**L**ORD VAIZEY, a distinguished economist with experience as an international civil servant, has many claims on our attention. To those convinced as he is of the precariousness of the present “peace”, an attempt both to unravel some of the origins of our situation and to point to some of the lessons of the past will seem deserving

of attention. Yet it is probable that most readers will find his new book *The Squandered Peace* disappointing.<sup>1</sup> He has assumed that it is possible to combine his own insights and advocacy with what amounts to a brief narrative history of a period stretching over 30 years and taking as its scope the entire globe. If the history does not convince, the argument will suffer. And much of it will not convince.

In the first place, one has a right to demand that the actual facts are correct—and to say, as Lord Vaizey does, that “on so big a canvas there are bound to be errors” would be all right if the errors were trivial or clearly due to over-hasty proof-reading, as in some cases in the present volume. But if the errors indicate unfamiliarity with the subject-matter—as when we learn that Churchill was already First Lord of the Admiralty when war broke out in 1939; or that the ending of the British Raj was postponed from June to August 1947 instead of being advanced from June 1948 to August 1947; or that the Communists left the post-war French government when de Gaulle resigned, rather than in 1947—they do in fact matter. And this is even more disturbing when the author deals with areas like Latin America or South-east Asia, where the British reader is less likely to spot such errors, than with Europe or the Middle East where he (like myself) feels more at home.

It is perhaps not terribly important for understanding the present problems of the Middle East to believe wrongly that Herzl was the founder of Zionism, or that the *Haganah* was the appellation given to “moderate Jews” in Palestine rather than to their military forces. But it is serious to be told that the Arabs within the Israeli frontiers as they stood in 1948 were “largely disfranchised”; it is precisely because they were not and could not be disfranchised that so many Israelis oppose further annexations of Arab-inhabited lands which could lead to the Arab vote becoming the decisive factor in Israeli politics. It casts even more doubt on the author’s grasp of the international situation in the area when we are told that one of the

possible candidates for leading the pan-Arab movement after Suez was the Shah of Iran—rather like suggesting the Rev Ian Paisley as a possible candidate on the next occasion of a vacancy in the Holy See.

Lord Vaizey seems to be making the fundamental mistake of believing that while the sciences (perhaps including economics) are academic disciplines into which one cannot penetrate without accepting and understanding their modes of operation, history can be written on the run by any intelligent person. And this is simply not the case. To ignore the rules is to court disaster. One rule is that one cannot begin a study at an arbitrary point, say 1945, without being prepared to go back further into the past where the subject-matter demands it. On important matters, Lord Vaizey’s grasp of the antecedents of his story is clearly defective.

Much of his argument about the origins of the “Cold War” and the possibilities of *détente* depends upon an interpretation of the attitudes of the Russians. But what can one make of an author who can say that in Russia “the mode of tyranny had changed little in a hundred years”? How can one possibly compare the authoritarian rule of the 19th-century Czars with the totalitarian rule of Stalin? As well compare the artistic achievements of “socialist realism” with the glorious literary and musical output of the century of Pushkin and Tolstoy or Mussorgsky and Tchaikovsky! Even the Soviet period itself seems not fully understood, or the origins and meaning of “peaceful co-existence” would be brought into a proper relationship with post-1945 attitudes and events.

LORD VAIZEY SAYS that, since the book is meant to be read, he has not given references for his facts. That is all very well and laudable when the facts are such as could be checked in any work of reference, or so familiar that no one is going to challenge them. But if one reads something unusual, should not the reader be informed on what grounds Lord Vaizey believes the statement to be true? Thus we learn that in “1950, when it looked as though the American army fighting in Korea might invade Siberia, Stalin ordered plans to be made ready for one million slaves at Kolyma to be murdered.” I do not suggest that Stalin would have shrunk from another million murders; but this claim is a very curious one. Even at his most overweening, when General MacArthur was contemplating invading Manchuria, there is no generally known evidence that he thought of going on into Siberia. And as for Kolyma—has Lord Vaizey ever looked at a map? Even supposing that Stalin thought the Americans were mad enough to attempt such an expedition, what evidence is there for his command to kill the “slaves”? (Perhaps Lord Vaizey has some Stalin diaries at his disposal.) The substitution of a book-list which, as Lord Vaizey

<sup>1</sup> *The Squandered Peace: The World, 1945–1975*. By JOHN VAIZEY. Hodder & Stoughton, £14.95, paper £8.95.

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admits, gives titles of books he has found interesting even though they have been superseded, is in no way helpful—as any historian could have told him. If one is limited to a book-list then one wants to know what are the standard authorities on the various periods, areas, and topics, and not merely what has caught the author's fancy.

**A**LL THIS IS NOT an exercise in pedantry. One of Lord Vaizey's themes is that there was an agreement between the Soviet Union and the West at Yalta, and that this could have been built upon for an enduring peace. But this argument depends on, among other things, an assessment of the Yalta Agreement itself, and of the interpretations placed upon it. Yet when we read on one page that Greece and Turkey were assigned to the British sphere of interest and on another that Italy was also so assigned, one does begin to wonder whether Lord Vaizey has ever read the Yalta Agreement, in which none of these countries were mentioned, for very good reason. Similarly, when he says that the westward expansion of Poland after the War "violated the Versailles Treaty provisions about nationality", one wonders if he has read the Versailles Treaty. Or is he thinking of President Wilson's Fourteen Points? Not at all the same thing.

Sometimes it is not so much a matter of evidence as of judgments pronounced *ex cathedra*, which a moment's thought will show to be entirely arbitrary. Thus, Lord Vaizey not only holds with many other writers that Britain stretched her re-

sources too thinly in the post-war world in an endeavour to maintain a world position to which her innate strength no longer entitled her, but also lays great stress on the strains placed upon the British economy by its efforts during the War as an explanation of subsequent weakness. All this is at least arguable, but when he also says that the British effort did not profoundly influence the War's outcome, what scenario is he offering of what would have happened had Britain accepted a peace with Hitler after Dunkirk? Does he really think that things would have gone on in much the same way? How could they?

But the British theme is in a sense subordinate to the main thrust of the argument. It comes together with it only at the point where, in Lord Vaizey's view, the mistake was made in 1954 of committing British troops to the Continent as a separate force, rather than as part of a "European Defence Community" which Britain could somehow have forced upon the reluctant French. It is on contentious points such as this that the cavalier treatment of sources and an unwillingness to follow negotiations in detail make it so hard to assess the strength of his argument. For it is his apparent contention that it was the decisions of the Western governments taken in 1954–55 which prevented an overall agreement with the Russians for a peaceful Europe, based upon a neutralised Germany on the model of the Austrian State Treaty.

But why should this have held when Potsdam did not? Why does Lord Vaizey assume that such an agreement, even supposing it could have been arrived at, would have ended the probing of Western weaknesses and the mobilising of Communist elements in Germany to make the neutrality a one-sided one? Was the Warsaw Pact really set up only in order to be sacrificed on the altar of *détente*? I cannot say for certain that all this is unthinkable; it is only that to argue the point demands much more attention to the actual course of events and to the motivations of Soviet policy than Lord Vaizey has been able to give in his scamper through world history.

It is also surprising when one comes to the chapter headed "Conclusions" to find Lord Vaizey arguing along lines almost opposite to those that appear to inspire the earlier chapters. For most of the book one gets glimpses of the American "revisionist" historiography in which the Americans themselves bear the blame for the outbreak and intensification of the "Cold War." Then suddenly we find that this thesis is rejected: the Americans are not too "hawkish" but too "doveish." They are blamed for not having given the lead to liberal and democratic forces in the world in the way in which the Soviet Union has sustained totalitarian movements. Above all, we are told, this is true of Latin America: "The United States' greatest defeat was that it never imposed constitutional democracy on the Continent as a whole; it never used might to impose what was right. . . ." How one imposes democracy is not an issue that Lord Vaizey seems to have considered. Ever since Woodrow Wilson defended his intervention in Mexico by saying that the object was to teach the Mexicans to elect good men, most sensible Americans have accepted the difficulties of such an attempt.

The curious thing is that Lord Vaizey also dismisses the only way in which democratic institutions have ever been imposed from outside, namely by the British Empire. He particularly

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denounces the concept of "preparation"—the idea that a population unaccustomed to such forms and principles can serve a useful apprenticeship. Yet why then does he think that while democracy has not taken root in countries with a relatively short period of incorporation within the British imperial system, it has done so in India where the contact was most profound and most prolonged? But India again seems to be a country whose fortunes have not been followed with the attention they deserve. It is true that Mrs Indira Gandhi's notions of democracy are at some removes from Mr Gladstone's, but to say that she turned her first period of rule

into a "dictatorship" is to overlook both what she did do, and how that period came to an end. To the reader, the word "dictator" suggests something quite different, and trained historians are more careful in their use of concepts. But since there is probably no possibility that the United States is going to attempt to remodel the societies and mores of its southern neighbours, this particular argument is somewhat academic. The Americans are limited by their ideology and inheritance as much as the Russians are by theirs. As politicians we may try to change things; as historians we should not speculate on unfulfilled conditions.

## Chinese Facts through Chinese Fiction

*Recent Studies—By DAVID POLLARD*



GIVEN A disinclination to look into academic books without good cause, the majority of us are dependent for our impressions of foreign parts, and enclaves within our own country, on fiction. Indeed, a sense of alien life as experienced at the individual level often cannot be gained elsewhere. Expectations of learning some truths about China from that source cannot, however, have been great for the 30 years between 1949 and 1979. As with other Communist countries, published literature pictured life as the leadership would have it thought to be. The typical novel of contemporary life in the 1950s,

for example, which celebrated triumph over adversity of one kind or another, was in essence a *China Reconstructs* feature with knobs on. In the early 1970s the literature, much reduced in quantity, depicted the proletarian hero whose only home was his brigade office and whose only family was his teammates. "Realism" was still the order of the day, but it was "Socialist Realism" of the kind promulgated at the 1934 Congress of Soviet Writers, designed to uplift workers and peasants. Towards the end of the Mao era it was heavily spiced with "Revolutionary Romanticism." The mixture was liable to spontaneous combustion, and did eventually go up in smoke.

Chinese fiction of the 1930s and '40s was a very different affair. By then the "New Literature", which took its lead from the West, had got over its novelty. Its authors had stopped extravagantly posturing, men and women from all backgrounds had taken up the pen to earn their living, and as a result the whole country was being mapped out. From the

frozen north of Manchuria to the steamy jungles of Yunnan, each province had its word artists. Not all of them were world-beaters, of course, but they knew their locations, the way of life, and could make their people talk convincingly. No doubt they had all heard of realism, but were oblivious enough of it to convey a sense of reality. The world of the well-to-do was regrettably underrepresented, but perhaps that had to do with the conscience of the age.

Despite the growing achievements of realistic writing, in 1936 a small group of intellectuals in Shanghai borrowed an idea of Gorki's to go one better: let the people themselves tell of their lives, or to be more precise, let them be invited to write of one day in their life, 21 May 1936. They were, and over 3,000 did: 469 of their contributions were published in the same September.<sup>1</sup> The book was a mine of information, but the ore far from pure. In too many instances the contributors adopted literary conventions, inexpertly, with the result that the integrity of the whole collection was called in question. They fell into the gap between artlessness and art that conceals art. Though shorter, these pieces were of the same kind as inferior published works that did not make the grade from propaganda to literature. Those that did seem genuine diary-type entries, though, related quite clearly to the same world depicted by reputable writers, so buttressing its authenticity.

Since the thaw after the death of Mao, this literature of the Republican period has been republished in China, much to the pleasure of the reading public, who find in it what the writing of their own age has lacked: personal voices, personal visions of life (which in sum tell one, of course, much more than corporate ones could ever do). Now the present generation of writers are contributing their own. But it took some time for the cultural revival to come about. Some of the pain and confusion occasioned by the ten years of the Cultural Revolution (1966–76) came out in the first wave of writing that followed. Lacking alternative models, and sure only of the fact that a different lot were in control, the stories were much as before, with the roles reversed: veteran cadre is right, young firebrand wrong. Often contradictions were left curiously

<sup>1</sup> A selection of these is presented in *One Day in China: 21 May, 1936*. Translated, edited and introduced by SHERMAN COCHRAN and ANDREW C. K. HSIEH, with JANIS COCHRAN. Yale University Press, £17.50, \$19.95.

unresolved, suggesting uncertainty about how things were going to turn out. The 1979 All-China Confederation of Writers and Artists Congress at last gave the green light to its members to create whatever they liked however they liked, as long as they did not in the process attack the foundations of the Chinese state. Politically the Democracy Movement was already past its peak, but it had shown that the unthinkable could now be thought, the unsayable now be said. Criticism and questioning in literature accordingly went deeper.

WHAT THE EDITORS OF *Mao's Harvest: Voices from China's New Generation*<sup>2</sup> call the "New Realism" of 1979–81 portrayed, in their words, "a society struggling with social and economic problems; a political system caught up in corruption, opportunism, and bureaucraticism; and a people emotionally scarred by disruptions brought about by their leaders." The dark side of Chinese society had been the constant target of left-wing writers before Liberation, but the note of disillusionment and betrayal had not been heard before—the "hapless love" for country that Bai Hua took as the title of his screenplay for a film that was never released: the sweat and blood had been given, but where was the return? This line of questioning was judged to be too near the knuckle, and when in April 1981 the Democracy Movement journals were banned and some of its leaders arrested, the lights were set at red. In any case, outright recrimination could only last so long; people had picked themselves up and wanted to look ahead. The lasting victory was that real life had returned to literature.

No trend is very tidy. Greater selectivity within the given time-band could still have produced an anthology more germane to the theme of exposure than *Mao's Harvest* is. Some of the works included look forward to the ensuing phase, when human problems were treated in a way that did not aim to shock or distress, but instead to strike a knowing, sympathetic chord, bespeaking the pleasure of recognition of shared experience or the acceptance that there are some fixes we just can't escape from. Take the topic of housing, which is the number one preoccupation in China, for example. The first wave of exposure literature concentrated on the malpractices that make for inequality in the provision of accommodation. I recall one satirical story cast as the self-history of a bottle of spirits that passed intact through a succession of hands as each owner presented it to the next to secure preferment. Liu Xinwu's "Overpass", translated here, also has one peripheral character who is an expert at manipulating the system, but Liu has moved on to examine the distortion of relations within the family caused by overcrowding. Even if all the crooks were eliminated this kind of problem would remain.

Had *Mao's Harvest* been illustrated, as magazine features usually are, we would have seen bent and pensive heads and drab backgrounds in place of the shining faces and fluttering banners of yester-year; there might even have been one or two of those dark shapes, human in outline, but bereft of humanity,

<sup>2</sup> *Mao's Harvest: Voices from China's New Generation*. Edited by HELEN F. SIU and ZELDA STERN. Oxford University Press, £12.95, \$17.95.

that appeared for a time in the press. More appealingly, the heroine of the boy-meets-girl story, "The Corner Forsaken by Love", would have revealed herself as a willowy beauty with eyes as deep as autumn pools, as the old phrase has it, for romance, newly condoned, brought glamour with it. Before those eyes can go misty over her suitor, the girl's internal wound has to heal—the crippling memory of her elder sister being hounded to death for yielding to a physical impulse that was beyond her comprehension. The other love story in the book, however, has neither glamour nor reference to victims of fanaticism. A very well known one by Zhang Jie, called "Love Cannot be Forgotten", it is rather uncertain in its plan, but its portrait of a sweet old lady who has held to her undeclared love for a married man throughout her adult life is full of touching detail. It can hardly be included in the description of "New Realism" quoted above: though published in 1979 its subject matter is the domestic life typical of the following phase. But then Zhang Jie is a true individualist. Though of a mature age (in her mid-forties), she yet has the advantage, through not launching on a writing career until 1978, of never having submitted herself to the discipline that governed the old hands, which has conditioned the latter to return to the fold after a bit of a romp.

IT COULD GO WITHOUT SAYING that a new fold has been prepared, complete with dogs to drive off black sheep. One sheep whose colour is suspect, the younger poet Bei Dao, has a poem in this volume. Though he has been translated into English and Swedish, no publisher has brought out a collection of his poems in China. This is partly because of his connection with the Democracy Movement, partly because his work is of that kind dubbed *menglongshi*, which I will translate simply as "obscure poetry." There have been broadsides against this "obscure" poetry in the Chinese literary press of late, but these have been childish in their arguments. The real reason for opposing it is that obscurity is disquieting: how can you give the contents a label if you are not sure what they mean? Speaking darkly in figures was to some extent thrust upon Bei Dao as a protective covering when he started writing in the early '70s (other young people used Classical Chinese for the same reason), but it is also something he cultivates. The leap of the imagination needed to associate images and sentiments in classical poetry he sometimes stretches to a distance that would make the most agile interpreter balk. Nevertheless he has his own coherence, he jolts you awake, and stimulates you to grapple with his intelligence. The most obtuse of his critics must see that his is a rare creative talent. One does not wish for him the fate of election to the Writers' Union; to keep the dogs quiet would suffice.

Bei Dao's poem contains the verse widely taken to be his manifesto:

*I don't believe the sky is blue;  
I don't believe the echo of thunder;  
I don't believe that dreams are false;  
I don't believe in death without retribution.*

Alienation has become a bogey word now in China. That verse scarcely betokens accommodation. But then neither does

suicide. What alienated from society thousands of men and women who committed suicide in the "Ten Years" was their sense of honour and decency. Their graves should not be spat on. Bei Dao and his fellow "obscure" poets are to the best of my knowledge likewise patriotic young people with admirable standards of personal morality. Their insistence on the validity of their private perceptions must to some extent be a revulsion against the invalidity of the public world that they grew up in. The imprint of that youthful experience cannot be erased, but the poetry it gave birth to can be, and has been, developed. The older generation appears to understand neither the experience, despite their own trials, nor the poetry. This is not surprising. Unfortunately they have the power to stifle expression, and the spectacle of established writers falling over themselves to renounce any connection with experimentation does not augur well.

**I** DOUBT IF THE ORTHODOX socialist literature to which the penitent are replying loyalty will have room in it, either, for the great novel I have been waiting for—the one that would really come to grips with the Cultural Revolution. Meanwhile one makes use of the perspectives contained in the limited kind of imaginative literature represented in *Mao's Harvest*; in reportage literature, among which Liu Binyan's "People or Monsters?"<sup>3</sup> is a classic; and of course in the studies made by foreign observers. Very informative among the latter is William Hinton's massive new book, *Shenfan*.<sup>4</sup>

The title *Shenfan* is a cute but lexically strained inversion of *Fanshen*, Hinton's original book on land reform in Longbow Village (Zhangzhuang) in the mountainous northern province of Shanxi, covering the period 1945–48. *Shenfan* brings the story up to 1971, the year of Hinton's first return visit. It therefore includes the Great Leap Forward of 1958 and the Cultural Revolution proper (1966–69). Hinton forcefully makes the point that town and country are separated in China by a partition plastered with residency permits and ration books. The intelligentsia being town dwellers, and *Shenfan* being about the countryside, we hear little about the problems of ideology and crises of conscience that they faced. When Hinton expands his account to the cities it is in order to explain policies and politics at county, province, and national levels, without which the events in Longbow would make no sense.

Hinton stayed in China for seven months in 1971; he returned in 1978 to spend a further two-and-a-half months in Longbow, and has been back since. He came away from the 1971 visit, he tells us, with ten books full of his notes. Presumably the records of subsequent long interviews must have filled many more. In his book the interview material and what he gained from reports and documents are blended together. From time to time recollections and statements are attributed to individuals, but for the most part the story is told as history. What is really disquieting is the amount of direct

<sup>3</sup> *People or Monsters? and Other Stories, and Reportage from China after Mao*. By LIU BINYAN. Edited by PERRY LINK. Indiana University Press, £9.72, paper £4.52.

<sup>4</sup> *Shenfan: The Continuing Revolution in a Chinese Village*. By WILLIAM HINTON. Secker & Warburg, £15.95.

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speech (far exceeding that in *Fanshen*), including heated utterances and quick-fire dialogue, that is quoted at length. I found no explanation as to how this feat of recording was done. Tape-recorders are not mentioned, and even if they were and passages transcribed, this testimony would have to be qualified as only one person's version of what was said and done.

One has therefore to put thoughts of verification aside and read Hinton's chronicle as a dramatised reconstruction of twenty years of Chinese socialism at ground level. To me it is not only very readable but also very persuasive. Hinton generously acknowledges the part his daughter, who grew up in China, played in his work, and it is true that to so confidently decipher the conflicts and personalities of the Cultural Revolution, in particular, inside knowledge would have been indispensable. He seems to have been fortunate in his other assistants too. But from his assessments and comments one can see that Hinton is an unusually intelligent and receptive person on his own account. The following lesson is one of those well learned:

"After 1949 unprincipled struggle over power also intensified right and left swings. At stake was not simply the right to lead the revolutionary movement, as was the case before Liberation, but the right to rule the nation. This qualitative difference introduced an acrimony into conflicts between individuals and cliques that soon became lethal. Such conflicts occurred with increasing frequency as the new apparatus of government took on all the attributes of China's traditional bureaucracy—centralised, all-powerful and responsible to no one outside its ranks. In a well-established hierarchy ambitious individuals base their decisions less on what is good for the country and more on what is good for their personal careers. The important thing is not to solve problems but to please superiors. If higher authorities call for dissolving shaky cooperatives, lower authorities dissolve cooperatives wholesale, the sound along with the unsound, as proof of their eagerness and competence. . . . Thus a slight corrective puff, when translated into policy at the village level, can turn into an irresistible hurricane that blows down everything in its path."

He goes on to point out that Chinese analysts are wrong to indict "feudal ideology" for subverting sound policies, rather than the real link with Chinese feudalism, namely this imperious bureaucracy. (Plus, one might add, transcending social systems, a good measure of the old Adam.)

ON TOP OF INVETERATE institutional problems came moral corruption. The Great Leap Forward was recalled by Hinton's villagers as the best of times and the worst of times (so far). The best because they completed gigantic projects on full bellies; the worst because the "Communist Wind" brought "conflicting orders, emergency tasks, and finally chaos." Hinton comments that "in the long run the biggest casualty of all was the habit of telling the truth." This refers to the epidemic of reporting quite fictitious achievements in order to please the leadership. Here, knowingly or not, he echoes the sentiments of Dr Zhivago:

"It was then that falsehood came into our Russian land. The great misfortune, the root of all evil to come, was the loss of faith in the value of personal opinions. . . ."

Politically, too, the Great Leap Forward set the country on a disaster course. Its failure split the leadership down the middle, and that division led to the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution, to give it its full title. It was the climax to a wave of socialist rectification campaigns launched by Chairman Mao to reverse the "capitalist" trend initiated by Liu Shaoqi in the wake of the failure of the Great Leap. Remarkably little of what actually went on in the course of the revolution filtered out at the time. Neither did the fiction that appeared after a moratorium of a few years give much clue to the true state of affairs.

It appeared that native ingenuity was solving all production difficulties, the people were uniting in one great family with the Party as mother and father, and the "tiny handful" of "capitalist roaders" were on their last legs. Somewhat disturbing was the elevation of "class hatred" to parity with "class love", and the fact that solutions to practical problems which were heralded as strokes of genius really only called for a modicum of common sense made one suspect their genuineness. Nevertheless, the droves of dedicated young revolutionaries shown giving their all for Chairman Mao were not a figment of the imagination. They were the Kitchener's Army of the day, marching to war. The trouble was in locating the enemy. As late as April 1976 the Revolutionary Committee in charge of a school in Canton sent the children out on the streets once a week, banging gongs to flush out capitalist roaders. In reality the enemy never rose from cover; they were in among the beaters. So the revolutionaries soon split into factions and fought among themselves.

HINTON'S LONGBOW VILLAGE was one of the countless places where there was nothing to choose politically or in class background between the power-holders and the power-snatchers. Differences were therefore manufactured. Teams of investigators dug into personal and family past, blew up every breath of scandal, and the fingered and the framed were dragged to denunciation meetings. Then there were beatings. Then there were killings. Then there was warfare, using tanks and artillery. Hinton's blow-by-blow account of the fighting and his description of the wanton cruelty make hair-raising reading, but there is no doubt that carnage was widespread, and Shanxi province may not have seen the worst of it.

Hinton offers explanations at various points for this extremism. The most ingenuous of motivations was the zealotry of factions who believed that unless they threw themselves wholeheartedly into the struggle, Chairman Mao would be lost (millions would have done the same for the Son of Heaven under the Empire). Then there was the declaration from the top that political opponents were class enemies; this automatically made them non-persons. In every country the withdrawal of equal citizen status invariably brings out the mobs against those so deprived; we need only recall that the mere offer of subsidised repatriation to Britain's coloured population, implying they were not welcome here, occasioned

an increase in attacks on them. Thirdly, the Cultural Revolution provided the opportunity for nobodies to rise in the world. Society under the Communist Party is as minutely and rigidly stratified as at any time in history (a recent short story nostalgically recalls the early 1950s when middle-ranking cadres were able to talk frankly to leading cadres). All those who did break through to the forefront thereby showed they had leadership qualities, but while some proved to have all-round ability, others were able only as gangsters. Fourthly, experience soon taught that the only way to deflect attacks on oneself was to attack others. The list could be extended, but these will be enough to go on with.

The army eventually managed to impose peace, but sharp antagonisms continued. It was not until the defection and death of Lin Biao, Mao's "close comrade in arms", that the struggles abated. That was in 1971, which is when *Shenfan* ends.

**T**HE SEE-SAW HAS TIPPED steeply enough since then to make some of its riders fall off and break their bones, but since Chairman Hua resigned Deng Xiaoping's team has kept its end weighted down firmly, to benign effect according to Godwin Chu and Francis Hsu, co-editors of *China's New Social Fabric*.<sup>5</sup> In summing up, they point to the restoration of limited local autonomy, the rectification of cadre work-style, and the part played by newspapers in venting and redressing grievances as bringing a much needed reconditioning to the social fabric. Their optimism is cautious; they know as well as anyone that crusading editors can be (some already have been) replaced, commandism among cadres can reassert itself, reaction against inequalities in wealth can swing the pendulum back towards totalistic collectivism. The cycle of Cathay has fairly speeded up in our time. Notwithstanding, the reversions are unlikely to be so dramatic now that the charismatic Mao Zedong is dead; in fact contention within the Party will take on the same look as contention between parties in democratic countries. Then perhaps China will be seen as ordinary, and the bottom will drop out of the "China witness" publishing market.

One does not want to sow alarm prematurely, however. The business is still healthy enough to have just admitted a former ambassador and a television producer to the company of the several journalists who have been publishing their China books. Erwin Wickert, *Bundesrepublik* ambassador to China from 1976 to 1980, has the same gift of total recall as Hinton, pre-eminently for his own discourses, which are strong on analogies from Chinese history to current affairs, though no distinction is made between surviving history, which might influence people's behaviour, and that locked in books. History, not forgetting the Nazi Germany example, is invoked to help explain the atrocities of the Cultural Revolution in the course of a cultivated discussion on the embassy terrace, but it is in the nature of *The Middle Kingdom*<sup>6</sup> that many points are made but none argued through; if you take them sympathetic-

<sup>5</sup> *China's New Social Fabric*. Edited by GODWIN C. CHU and FRANCIS L. K. HSU. Routledge & Kegan Paul, £8.95.

<sup>6</sup> *The Middle Kingdom: Inside China Today*. By ERWIN WICKERT. Harvill Press, £12.50.

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ally you will allow they have some validity, but if you want to take issue it is easy enough to do so. It may be sheer accident, but one curious slip of Wickert's is to rename Sir Percy Cradock, the British ambassador, "Pierce." It is a perhaps unavoidable drawback that ambassadors are more at home with Pierces than Percys. I confess I would have been more interested to read a book from him about his service in a less exalted China station, during the Second World War. Any loss in urbanity one would have been prepared to face with fortitude.

ALASDAIR CLAYRE'S *The Heart of the Dragon*<sup>7</sup> (sadly, the author died before its publication) bears witness to contemporary China in that it is the companion book to the television film series of the same name shot on location in 1982 and 1983. The eleven topics dealt with range over all the important aspects of national life. Extracts from the filmed interviews are quoted (no doubt here about who said what, and

<sup>7</sup> *The Heart of the Dragon*. By ALASDAIR CLAYRE. Harvill Press, £12.95.

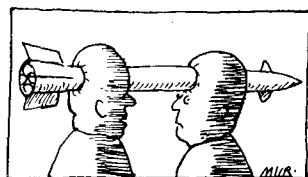
when!), and local data collected on the spot is passed on. Yet history and tradition play a very big part in the book, too.

Clayre evidently set himself to learn about China with enthusiasm. Advised and assisted by phalanxes of eminent academics, he selected some choice material to illustrate his topics. The text does contain one or two odd ideas, but they can be swallowed without any real harm done. His outstanding virtue as author stems precisely from the fact that he came new to the subject, brought with him a sense of discovery, and served his fare hot from the pot—not a whiff of cold porridge to make the nose wrinkle. The splendid illustrations on every page upgrade the fare to banquet status; and films and book together should be enough to satisfy the public appetite for news from China for some time to come.

One can but hope that interest in the inner life of the Chinese people, expressed in their literature, will not become an incidental casualty—always assuming that there continues to be a literature. Almost all the Chinese officials I meet are privately people of catholic interests and good taste; if they make their influence felt the future will be assured, for there is plenty of talent about.

## Peace & Deterrence

### *Strategies for Security—By TIMOTHY GARDEN*



ALFRED NOBEL, inaugurating his prize for peace, is reputed to have expressed the wish that he could "invent a machine of such frightful efficiency for wholesale destruction, that wars should thereby become altogether impossible." It was to be another half-century, and two World Wars in which the destruction was altogether wholesale, before science provided the answer to his prayer. The philosophical difficulties of a strategy of preventing war through the possession of an instrument of total devastation, the nuclear weapon, have multiplied as the years have passed. In periods when the perceived chance of war between nuclear powers is low, only the strategic analysts worry. At times of crisis, or international tension, it appears that every man is entitled to shout his views on the utility of nuclear deterrence. A combination of events since 1979 has made nuclear policy appear to be second only to the personal computer revolution in providing a bonanza for publishing houses.

<sup>1</sup> *War in the Modern Great Power System, 1495–1975*. By JACK S. LEVY. University Press of Kentucky, £20.40, \$24.00.

The end of the decade of *détente*—with the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan, the non-ratification by the United States of the SALT II Treaty, the enhanced radiation weapon (neutron bomb) fiasco, the NATO ministers' 1979 dual-track decision, and the British government's decision to replace the Polaris strategic deterrent force—ensured that the debate remained fuelled. Some have claimed that Western, and less often that Soviet, strategy was changing to a direction which made war more likely. Some argued that the mere possession of nuclear weapons made war inevitable eventually, and that the more there were the sooner it must happen. The Churches debate the absolute morality of weapons of mass destruction. Former military leaders and statesmen make headline-catching remarks, which appear to reverse the nuclear policies they had implemented when in office. The books, articles, monographs and papers continue.

Any examination of the international scene, and the prospects of war, must take into account the relationship between the United States and the Soviet Union. Their undoubted mutual ability totally to devastate one another, should they so desire and regardless of any precautions taken, is without parallel in history. It is therefore with some degree of scepticism that one approaches Jack Levy's *War in the Modern Great Power System, 1495–1975*.<sup>1</sup> Establishing a data base of

past conflicts, specified by duration, extent, magnitude, severity, intensity and concentration over five centuries, is an entirely laudable academic enterprise. Hoping to use the data base to deduce a theory of the causes of war which can be applied to today's world is a rather more dubious undertaking. To learn that "the typical war lasts about three years and involves about two Powers, five nation-years of war, and 17,000 fatalities (about 180 per million European population and about 3,400 per year for each participating Power)" is as valuable as knowing that the average family has 2.7 children. Wars are by their nature unpredictable, and statistical analysis of the past has shown less potential for predictions of the future than have the equally unproductive, yet much better documented, economic statistical analyses of the past. The book's flyleaf bears the unusual claim that "one of its attractive features is that, while it is sufficiently rigorous to satisfy Social Scientists, it is in a style which is readily accessible to historians and to non-specialists."

IF THE QUANTITATIVE DATA analysis of war, in Jack Levy's conclusion, "does not easily lead to an extensive summary or grand conclusion at this point", then the reader must look elsewhere for thoughts on the prospects for security. George Kennan's collected pieces from 1950–1982 in *The Nuclear Delusion*<sup>2</sup> form a fascinating insight into the consistency of his views on Soviet-American relations over many years. Inevitably, such a collection suffers from repetition of ideas and examples, as old speeches and articles are updated for new audiences, but this does nothing to detract from the power of his sincerely held convictions. It is useful to be reminded that this eminent former US Ambassador to the USSR was advocating a "no first use" nuclear doctrine as long ago as 1954. By the same token, the reader has the benefit of thirty years' hindsight, through the continuing nuclear peace, to draw the conclusion that deterrence has been more robust than Kennan expected. He makes it clear in his introduction that he does not believe that war can be totally ruled out:

"I have been going on the assumption that while another conventional war in Europe would indeed be an immense danger, not to be undergone without new and lasting damage to European civilisation, nevertheless, the main and most urgent necessity was to get rid of the nuclear weapons, the mere extensive existence of which, given the possibilities for error and accident, presented a danger beyond any other that civilised life had ever known; and that, having got rid of these latter, one could somehow set out with good confidence to muddle along with the conventional weapons, hoping that some sort of balance among them could eventually be achieved and that they, too, would never come into use."

Many nuclear disarmament proposals start from a similar premise. There is an overwhelming desire to make the outcome of any conflict which occurs less horrific, even if the measures taken make that conflict itself more likely. There is no way of resolving this dichotomy. For one state to deter another from

<sup>2</sup> *The Nuclear Delusion*. By GEORGE F. KENNAN. Hamish Hamilton, £12.50.

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aggression, it must make the consequences of that aggression self-evidently not worth the risk. Reducing the certainty of the consequences carries with it a decrease in deterrent effectiveness, and a consequent increase in the probability of conflict. The risk may be bearable for George Kennan, safe in his belief that "the Soviet leadership, I am satisfied, has no intention, and has never had any intention, of attacking Western Europe."

AS IF TO ANSWER the criticism of relative risks, the editors of *Dangers of Deterrence*,<sup>3</sup> who make no bones about the unilateralist beliefs of their contributors, use their introduction to put a counter-thesis:

"Anti-Unilateralists have to show that unilateralism is more likely to lead to the same damage as the failure of deterrence, or equally likely to lead to worse. If neither can be shown then moral considerations weigh decisively in favour of unilateralism."

This is nonsense, and belies the claim that "in this book, philosophers go behind the rhetoric of the nuclear debate." As happens in so much of the literature, the assumption is made that deterrence will inevitably fail, and therefore outcomes must be compared on that basis. Among the arguments given for such an assumption is:

"The new 'deterrence' will not be just a new attempt at the same kind of strategic stance, but a radically new departure. At the concrete level, a NATO 'deterrent' policy built around the super-accurate Trident D5 and medium-range Euro-strategic missiles (such as the cruise Tomahawk (ground- and air-launched) and Pershing II) is not just a variant of one based on atomic shells, howitzers, depth charges, Lance missiles, Pershing 1a and a few aged Polaris subs chugging around the North Sea."

Such *non sequiturs* abound. For those who wish an object lesson in how to write such alarmist claptrap, Philip Towle has written an amusing mock-unilateralist hand-out based on the assumption that the new nuclear weapons systems are being replaced by the old.<sup>4</sup> He shows how a move to less accurate, more vulnerable, and less reliable systems could spawn the argument that "all this makes clear that both sides are preparing for fighting a war, rather than for deterrence." Ken Booth's contribution to *Dangers of Deterrence* gives the best analysis of why the 1980s could be more brittle for relations between the superpowers than the previous decade. He concludes that "it is not surprising that the smell of war is back in the air." Looking for a progressive denuclearisation of Britain's defences, he argues for the need for improvement in conventional forces, including the rapid reintroduction of national service.

<sup>3</sup> *Dangers of Deterrence*. Edited by NIGEL BLAKE and KAY POLE. Routledge & Kegan Paul, £5.95.

<sup>4</sup> *Protest and Perish*. By PHILIP TOWLE. Institute for European Defence and Strategic Studies, £3.75.

<sup>5</sup> *Strengthening Conventional Deterrence in Europe: Proposals for the 1980s*. Report of the EUROPEAN SECURITY STUDY. Macmillan, £17.50, paper £5.95.

It is not just the nuclear disarmers who see a need for improving NATO's conventional strength. When the trip-wire strategy was replaced by one of flexible response, the requirement for conventional forces increased. NATO must have a credible response to any form of aggression by the Warsaw Pact, in order to couple the deterrent effect of the American strategic nuclear guarantee to any lower levels of conflict. Such a range of responses requires effective conventional forces, as well as nuclear systems. The weaker the West's conventional forces are, the more nearly NATO strategy returns to the pre-1967 state of a trip-wire response. This has two drawbacks: the credibility of nuclear retaliation to some relatively small-scale action by the Soviets is low, and hence deterrence of such actions is reduced; and if, as a result, Warsaw Pact forces did attempt some action in Western Europe, NATO would very rapidly reach the point where it would have to use its nuclear forces or face defeat.

The problem is in deciding what level of conventional forces is sufficient. The appropriate level must reflect, but not necessarily match, developments in the East. Through the 1970s, the conventional forces of the Warsaw Pact have undergone a very significant re-equipment with modern powerful weapons systems. The conventional force imbalance has therefore become of increasing concern to NATO. The European Security Study, a group of eminent civilian and retired military strategists, examined the problem in 1981. The report on their work<sup>5</sup> is a useful contribution to the debate, looking initially at the Soviet threat, and then at the requirements for conventional defence to counter this threat. Unfortunately, it is now quoted extensively as evidence that it is possible for NATO to replace its nuclear dependence by advanced technology conventional weapons.

The final section of the report, which deals with the advanced technology equipment, is the most important and also the least convincing. Proposals include specialised missiles to attack airfields, choke-points, and ground forces. For example, to stop just 30 airfields from operating for a period of three days would require 600 Pershing II missiles with advanced conventional warheads. The cost of any such system must be speculative, and previous experience might suggest that this will be a limiting factor. Even assuming that NATO nations could afford to field such forces, the effect on the nuclear threshold is by no means obvious. The Warsaw Pact just might be concerned to see hundreds of ballistic missiles coming their way, even if every warhead carried a non-nuclear sticker. The proliferation of missile systems would also vastly complicate any future prospects for arms control. In any event, are such highly specialised, and to some extent scenario-dependent, systems a sensible way ahead for military forces? While we put all our effort into deterring a war in Europe, and therefore do not have to fight one, we do need our forces to fight from time to time in other parts of the world. The single-shot surface-to-surface missile is not an ideal weapon for these limited conflicts in distant places.

MIGHT IT NOT BE POSSIBLE to tackle the problems of extended deterrence credibility from a different direction? When America was secure, before the

Soviets developed their strategic nuclear systems, the nuclear guarantee to Europe was entirely credible. If the miracles of modern technology could provide a magic bubble over the United States, then all would be well again—or so General Daniel O. Graham believes. In *The Non-Nuclear Defense of Cities*,<sup>6</sup> a summary of the “high frontier” concept, he explains how it is possible to build a space-based defence against attack by ballistic missiles.

There is no doubt that both America and the Soviet Union are spending considerable amounts of money on research in this area. It is also quite clear that this particular line of development, with or without directed energy weapons in space, will never provide a 100% effective defence. The last time that both superpowers became excited about the possibility of anti-ballistic missile defences, each realised that any defensive system could be countered at less expense merely by increasing the numbers of offensive systems. As a result, they agreed to the ABM Treaty as part of the SALT negotiations in 1972. The technology may be more exotic today, but the arguments remain the same. The costs quoted in this study belong to the realms of fiction, and one can only agree with General Graham’s qualification: “cost data validity for the illustrative High Frontier Programs range from hard to very soft.” Despite all the publicity surrounding the US Star Wars strategy, the President’s commission on strategic forces reported last year that “applications of current technology offer no real promise of being able to defend the United States against massive nuclear attack in this century.”

The desire to return to a pre-nuclear age, when war was thinkable, is understandable. There is no lack of literature explaining, in graphic detail, the possible consequences of nuclear war. In *Doomsday*,<sup>7</sup> the authors look at Britain after a nuclear attack. The blurb attempts to engender interest by claiming that “*Doomsday* exposes facts that have hitherto been unavailable, possibly suppressed.” Any assessment of the effect of a nuclear war requires assumptions about the enemy’s targeting policy, the political decisions on both sides, the weather, the time of day, and hundreds of other either unknown or unpredictable factors. The authors have looked at possible scenarios, and calculated possible consequences in minute detail, but presenting them as computer print-outs renders them no more objective. What is substantiated is the unarguable view that a nuclear attack on Britain would be a catastrophic disaster, which must be prevented. *The Medical Effects of Nuclear War*<sup>8</sup> confirms that the National Health Service could not cope with multiple nuclear explosions.

Such elaborations of the possible consequences of a nuclear attack on Britain should engender great caution in those who propose to make major changes in direction of strategy, which might reduce stability and hence increase the chances of such devastation. Britain’s own strategic deterrent force can ensure,

<sup>6</sup> *The Non-Nuclear Defense of Cities: The High Frontier Space-Based Defense Against ICBM Attack*. By GENERAL DANIEL O. GRAHAM. Abt Books, \$25.00.

<sup>7</sup> *Doomsday*. By STAN OPENSHAW, PHILIP STEADMAN, and OWEN GREENE. Basil Blackwell, £15.50, paper £4.95.

<sup>8</sup> *The Medical Effects of Nuclear War*. The Report of the BRITISH MEDICAL ASSOCIATION’S BOARD OF SCIENCE AND EDUCATION. John Wiley, £4.50.

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regardless of the uncertain future, that it will never be worthwhile for any nation to initiate a nuclear attack on the United Kingdom, knowing that devastating retaliation can, and most certainly will, follow. In *Soviet Threat Perceptions of Nato's Eurostrategic Missiles*,<sup>9</sup> William Garner shows how increasingly important it is to dissuade the Soviets from coming to believe that limited war in Europe could be a viable doctrine. The deployment of cruise missiles and Pershing II, in addition to the British and French strategic forces, can counter that option, and hence make real arms limitations more attractive to the Soviets eventually.

Where, then, does 1983's crop of nuclear books leave the open-minded observer? He probably never doubted that nuclear war was in itself a bad thing, and there is no lack of material to confirm his worst fears. How can the risk of such an appalling catastrophe be minimised? Are nuclear weapons in themselves so dangerous, so accident-prone, so poorly controlled, and so much at the whim of deranged politicians and military men that they must be disposed of as quickly as possible, regardless of the consequences? Assessing the dangers of a nuclear war, Paul Bracken in his scholarly examination of *The Command and Control of Nuclear Forces*<sup>10</sup> reminds us that:

"Some people consider it remarkable that no nuclear weapons have been fired since 1945. Far more remarkable is the absence of a full Soviet-American alert. No American bombers have been launched in anticipation of enemy attack, at no time have nuclear weapons in Europe been dispersed from their peacetime storage sites, nor have all of the Soviet nuclear submarines been dispatched from their ports at one time. Instead of the Munich world of blackmail

backed by nuclear alerts that was predicted, we have had more than 35 years in which nuclear forces have been handled with kid gloves, because national leaders have understood the dangers."

This, as he goes on to show, does not mean that there are no dangers, and that changes in strategy could reduce the risks in time of crisis. The key to such changes is that they should be incremental. Major changes in direction, such as total nuclear disarmament, or perhaps one side discovering and deploying "the magic bubble", are more likely to be causes of war than the continued operation of the "balance of terror" which has worked for so many years.

NOBODY CAN READ ALL the literature on deterrence, and few would wish to. So where can the general reader find a source-book of all shades of opinion? Despite its title, *Unholy Warfare*<sup>11</sup> is not a partisan book. The editors have collected the opinions of academics, churchmen, politicians, the military, and writers—ranging from those who would advocate a well-armed multilateral approach, right through to the true pacifist. No conclusions are drawn, and the reader can compare the merits of each case as expressed by its eminent exponent. Although the book takes the Synod debate on the Bomb as its justification, it stands as a contribution to the wider debate. The danger of nuclear war concerns all the contributors, but some see the peace which deterrence provides as a cause of optimism for the future. Looking at the development of the international system in the nuclear age, Professor Harry Hinsley is able to conclude that there are grounds for suggesting

"... that we are now witnessing the formation of an international system which will be even more different from the modern system than that system was from all its precursors, and which will be so because its leading states will abstain from war with each other. But since it will also be a system in which conflict and confrontation continue, between those states as between the others, let me conclude by reminding you that Immanuel Kant, he who first foresaw that precisely such a system would one day materialise, allowed that it would remain subject to constant danger from 'the law-evading bellicose propensities in man' but judged that, once constructed, it would survive for that very reason."

Nuclear deterrence may not be an easy or comfortable option for the world, but it offers greater prospects for continuing peace than the alternatives. Although it is robust, that does not mean that there are no ways to improve stability and reduce the risk of war yet further; the continuing discussion is to be welcomed as an opportunity to explore these possibilities. In the final analysis, all contributors to the nuclear debate have a common aim: the preservation of peace.

<sup>9</sup> *Soviet Threat Perceptions of Nato's Eurostrategic Missiles*. By WILLIAM V. GARNER. The Atlantic Institute for International Affairs, (120 rue de Longchamp, 75116 Paris), \$14.00.

<sup>10</sup> *The Command and Control of Nuclear Forces*. By PAUL BRACKEN. Yale University Press, £14.95, \$19.95.

<sup>11</sup> *Unholy Warfare*. Edited by DAVID MARTIN and PETER MULLEN. Basil Blackwell, £12.00, paper £4.95.

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# The War-Torn Holy Land

*Jewish & Arab Perspectives—By T. R. FYVEL*



THROUGH THE steadfastness of Churchill's Britain, fighting alone against Hitler in 1940 in the skies over England and in the Middle East, the Jews of Britain and of Palestine were saved from the fate Hitler dealt out to their Continental counterparts. With the Allied victory in 1945, what remained of Europe's Jewry was also saved. I was intensely aware of this through-

out my wartime years. Yet the War which gathered its own momentum was not being fought "for the Jews", at least as far as my indirect wartime employers, His Majesty's Foreign Office, were concerned. When in December 1940 the *Salvador*, a ship carrying illegal Jewish refugees to Palestine, sank in the Sea of Marmara with a loss of 200 lives, T. M. Snow, head of the Refugee Section of the Foreign Office, noted: "There could have been no more opportune disaster from the point of view of stopping this traffic." And in March 1942, when the British Ambassador to Turkey, Sir Hughe Knatchbull-Hugessen, suggested that the Turks should let the *Struma*, a ship overloaded with 700 unhappy Jewish refugees, proceed into the Mediterranean because on humanitarian grounds they might be allowed to land in Palestine, his intervention was received with outrage at the Foreign and Colonial Offices.

Just before the *Struma* sank with all aboard, Lord Moyne (later murdered, alas, by the Stern Gang) said that he found it difficult to write with moderation about Sir Hughe's action, which "would have a deplorable effect in encouraging further Jewish refugees to try to escape from Hitler's Europe." The then British High Commissioner for Palestine commented that the refugees on the *Struma* had after all been enemy nationals. At the time of the *Struma*'s sinking, the British authorities did not yet know about Hitler's extermination camps. But they were well aware of them by September 1944, when in a comment on an Anglo-Jewish delegation requesting some action, A. R. Dew of the Foreign Office noted: "A disproportionate amount of the time of this office is wasted on dealing with these wailing Jews." The full, sorry story of these events has been documented by Martin Gilbert in *Auschwitz and The Allies* (1981), his magisterial and objective story of the subject. To be sure, Mr Dew was rebuked by a fellow official; but there followed the remark attributed to Anthony Eden that, as between the Jews and Arabs, he disliked the Jews the more—and then the failure to take action on Churchill's directive that Auschwitz should be bombed.

After victory in 1945, the Foreign Office seemed to have one ruling passion: that to safeguard British rule in Palestine and the Middle East, no Jewish survivors of the Holocaust should leave Europe. This led to a sordid contest in the Mediterranean between the Royal Navy and Jewish refugee ships, and a guerrilla war in Palestine into which his advisers led the British Foreign Secretary, Ernest Bevin. It was a conflict he was bound to lose, because by this time the American Jews had been awakened to the full dimensions of the Holocaust, and Bevin had to realise that he could not carry out a Middle East policy in crass opposition to the USA. All this led to the policy-less abdication of Britain from the Palestine Mandate, leaving the country in chaos and its three-quarters-of-a-million Jews to be attacked by the armies of the surrounding Arab states. They beat the attack back, but at a cost of 6,000 dead, proportionately equal to a British loss of half-a-million.

True, the Foreign Office did not represent ordinary, friendly British opinion; and of course the Palestine Arabs had a case against Jewish immigrants—one which I have always stressed. British post-war policy was not conducted for love of the Arabs, but for a mirage: that control of the Middle East was essential for British strategic and oil-supply interests.

I have not engaged in this lengthy preamble to rake over cold ashes, but to make a specific point: that, against this background, Lord Carrington, Sir Geoffrey Howe, *The Times*, *The Guardian*, et al., are the last people who should expect the resultant state of Israel to be "nice" and "malleable." Given the background of death and hostility, it is remarkable that for its first twenty years Israel should have been so "nice" in the international view.

But now to make the converse point. Israel today appears "difficult", or rather only half-nice. The nice half of Israel, represented by *kibbutzim*, universities and trade unions, by an admirably free press and musical and literary life, is still there; but at times it can seem as if it had been strangely taken over by the Right-wing Likud Government of Begin, Sharon, and Shamir. Under their rule the Arab West Bank continued to be militarily occupied and colonised, something which all my Israeli political friends oppose. Pockets of chauvinism and religious obscurantism have appeared, inflation became rampant, and Israel could look like just another self-centred Middle East state.

ONE HAS TO ACKNOWLEDGE this transformation of Israel, from which the country has slowly begun to recover, as the pushing aside of General Sharon shows. He may have been a brilliant general, but as a politician leading Israel

into the bloody Lebanon war he was both ruthless and morally blundering. Western Jewish spokesmen—let them be nameless—who tried in 1982 to find mitigating circumstances for Sharon's war did the Jewish name no good. No, the question is to discover why Israel, which used to be deemed such a marvellously civilised place, should have so changed or appear to have changed.

Was the reason the current exhaustion of that international liberal humanism of which Israel and Zionism had originally formed part? Or the mass influx in 1949–51 of the Jews from Arab countries, who had never known Western democracy but whose sons and daughters in 1977 voted Begin into office? Or was it hubris after the Six Day War, and the coarsening effect of constant wars with the Arabs and oppressive military occupation of the West Bank? My own main explanation for the transformation would be the final passing away of an outstanding Zionist pioneer generation, but there is no doubt that the military developments which turned Israel into a nation of successful soldiers have played their part. This makes the revised and enlarged re-issue of Edward Luttwak's and Daniel Horowitz's informative book on Israel's armed forces from 1948–1973<sup>1</sup> very timely.

The origins of the Israeli army which they describe were unique. I remember them—in 1937 when Arab rebels were off-and-on attacking Jewish *kibbutzim* and British convoys, the policy of the *Hagana* (the Jewish underground defence force) was still that of complete "self-restraint." They fired only in self-defence, as laid down by the Jewish socialist leaders in charge, who were in the European pacifist tradition. (It was Captain (as he then was) Orde Wingate who in 1938 convinced the *Hagana* leaders that, with Hitlerism on the march, they had to learn to defend themselves by counter-attack tactics carried out with audacity. The early pacifist spirit among the Jewish defenders was important in two ways. It enabled an élite of young Left-wing intellectuals, of the sort not generally found in other armies, to assume the leadership in the forces. And secondly, since the stress was on self-defence, it enabled almost all Palestine Jews to serve without qualms as reservists.

That pattern has remained. From the costly victory over the Arab states in 1948–49, there emerged from the *kibbutzim* an élite of combat-trained young officers who were accustomed to leading their men from the front. At the same time, Israel's Premier, David Ben Gurion, was able to establish a national force of reservist regulars through lengthy compulsory military service followed by frequent refresher courses. As Luttwak and Horowitz show, the nature of Israel's citizen forces was a response to a challenge. Because her population was so small, Israel's standing army to lead the reserves in time of crisis was also small. It therefore had to be a purposeful concentration of the nation's best talents, and a young force (with senior officers retiring in their forties). Again, since early Israel was an egalitarian society, businessmen in the reserves served readily under their clerks, and professors were instructed by their students. In the Israeli view, the small size of the country made static lines of defence unfeasible; the preferable defence was, they believed, a crushing counterblow. And because Israeli

society was intensely self-conscious, with every casualty a disaster, the Israeli forces became a model of how to look after their wounded or shell-shocked soldiers meticulously, for they were a citizen army.

Luttwak and Horowitz describe the growth, strategy, tactics and equipment of the Israeli armed forces in clear and graphic fashion. They deal with conflict after conflict: the war of 1948–49; the Suez war of 1956; the shattering triumphs of the Six-Day victory of 1967; the war of attrition against Nasser in 1969–70. They end just before the Yom Kippur war of 1973 in which Israel, with her three million people, put into the field the third largest tank force and sixth largest air force in the Western world—an extraordinary feat. They discuss Israeli debates about the role of paratroopers, of tank columns, swift in attack, and of an autonomous all-fighter air force. For military students, the account of the destruction of Nasser's entire air force on the ground on the first morning of the Six Day War must be instructive reading.

My one critical query is about what Luttwak and Horowitz omit. This volume stops in 1973 (a second volume is promised), and by that time signs of basic changes in Israel were surely already present. In the Yom Kippur war, over-confident Israeli forces had initially let themselves be badly taken by surprise; afterwards there followed occasional corruption scandals, the fall of the Labour Government, and the surprise election to office in 1977 of Begin and the Israeli Right. The seeds of these changes were already discernible after the victory of 1967, under the premiership of Golda Meir; but the authors make little reference to them.

Apart from a few words about the social backwardness of Egyptian soldiers, the authors also say little about Israel's Arab opponents in these conflicts. Yet these suffered successive military defeats; how did this affect their thinking? They suffered heavy casualties; how did ordinary Arabs and Egyptians react? These unanswered questions are crucial. Although a peace treaty with Egypt has been signed, relations with the Palestinians are still unsolved, and there remains the problem of the fairly harsh occupation of the West Bank, to which many people in Israel are bitterly opposed.

ON THESE QUESTIONS OF Arab opinions, I confess I remain much in the dark. If one looks at the Arab world of today—at the fundamentalist Islamic surge of Khomeini, and of the Moslem Brothers; at the royalist Islamic structure of Saudi Arabia; at the rigid military dictatorships of President Assad in Syria and Gaddafi in Libya; at the fantasies and splits in the PLO, culminating in the fratricidal fighting in Tripoli between Yasser Arafat and his opponents—one has to admit that Arab developments have run on unpredictable, erratic lines, and wait for a convincing analysis. In the case of the Palestinians, for instance, one has to ask why throughout their conflict with the Zionists they have been politically so maladroit, so all-or-nothing in their rejection of every single compromise proposal (as they were with the Partition proposals of the Peel Commission of 1937, and of the UN in 1947).

When I visited British Mandatory Palestine in the early

<sup>1</sup> *The Israeli Army, 1948–73*. By EDWARD LUTTWAK and DANIEL HOROWITZ. Abt Books, \$25.00.

1930s, I thought that the Palestine Arabs, led by land-owning families like the Husseinis and the Nashashibis, were not so much engaging in rival party politics as playing at them for family advantage. Professor Amnon Cohen of Jerusalem University, in his somewhat dry monograph on the West Bank under Jordanian rule from 1947–67,<sup>2</sup> has tried to investigate some further stages in Arab political development.

Jordan took over the West Bank in 1948, and in view of King Hussein's recent diplomatic activity towards the area, it is interesting to note that in 1957 he simply declared all political parties on the West Bank to be illegal, and dissolved them. This was typical, as was the fact that the parties continued to work underground. Professor Cohen describes these small groups: the Communists; the radicals who rejected the mere existence of Israel (rather as some extreme Zionists rejected Palestinian existence); the Moslem Brothers striving for Islamic Purity; the more nondescript Liberation Party; and so on. Watched incessantly by the Jordanian secret service, the activities of the intellectuals in these parties remained fitful. Professor Cohen throws little light, for instance, on the question of how the one-and-a-half million Palestinians today living in Jordan regard the autocratic rule of King Hussein.

**A**S THINGS ARE, for the Arab viewpoint one still has to rely largely on Western spokesmen. Prominent among these is Dr Gwyn Rowley of Sheffield University, who is a consultant to the Saudi Government. His *Israel into Palestine*<sup>3</sup> is a work of scholarship, documenting his assertions (often largely from Zionist sources), and offering an immense bibliography. He starts his survey of the Palestine conflict in Biblical times, goes on to the Balfour Declaration, the arrival of the German Jews, World War II, the emergence of the state of Israel and the various Israeli-Arab wars, and ends with six possible scenarios for the future. His views on the success of Yasser Arafat and the failure of Syria in the Lebanon jigsaw are forecasts which have typically already been overtaken by events. However, drawing liberally on Israeli and Western Jewish critics of the Israeli Government's policies (Israel, after all, is a democracy) he makes out a strong case against the policies of Begin, Sharon, and Shamir, especially concerning the much-disputed Israeli colonisation on the occupied West Bank. Here I would tend, basically, to agree with him—and indeed Dr Rowley would find some of his strictures echoed in liberal Israeli newspapers like *The Jerusalem Post* and *Ha'aretz*.

Overall, however, *Israel into Palestine* is a very strange book, for in his whole survey of the complex and sometimes tragic Jewish-Arab conflict, Dr Rowley has not one good thing to say for the Jewish side, never one; and on not one debatable issue does he allow the Jews one grain of benefit of the doubt. Moreover, the rise of European political anti-Semitism (ending with the Holocaust), which played so large a part in Zionist

actions, is curiously shifted aside. Thus Dr Rowley says that in making the so-called "*Ha'avera*" arrangements of the 1930s (in which the Jewish Agency negotiated with the German authorities to let German Jews emigrate to Palestine with at least a fraction of their belongings), the Agency was "collaborating with the Nazis to free Germany of its Jews." Good heavens! At that desperate time every Jewish organisation in the world was negotiating with Germany to help German Jews get out before doom overtook them. I myself negotiated to get some relatives out of Vienna in the nick of time. Were we all then "collaborating with the Nazis"?

Dr Rowley goes further and claims that the Zionists, whom he sees not as an untidy and often conflicting alliance of Jewish forces from Left to Right, but as a somehow monolithic force, were primarily interested in their own concerns and not in "the ghastly plight of the millions of Jews who perished during the Nazi Holocaust." Alas, my memory still goes back to a day in late 1944, somewhere in the wintry Apennines, when certain wartime contacts informed me of the full facts about Auschwitz—and the despair felt among people in London around the ageing Zionist President, Chaim Weizmann, and among people in Palestine and in listening-posts on the Nazi edge, such as Istanbul. I little thought at the time that, 40 years on, attempts could be made to deny those feelings.

This accusation that the Zionists "collaborated with the Nazis" regardless of the Holocaust actually springs not from Arab sources but from the murkier level of Soviet anti-Semitic propaganda. The sequence runs: (1) Israelis are "racists", like the Nazis; therefore (2) Zionist Jews have always been like

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<sup>2</sup> *Political Parties in the West Bank under the Jordanian Régime, 1949–1967*. By AMNON COHEN. Cornell University Press, £11.50, \$25.35.

<sup>3</sup> *Israel into Palestine*. By GWYN ROWLEY. Mansell Publishing, £14.50.

Nazis; therefore (3) from the start they collaborated with the Nazis; therefore (4) they collaborated even during the Holocaust. Surely this mendacious Soviet accusation should not be seriously repeated.

In his chapter on discrimination against the Jerusalem Arabs, Dr Rowley makes some good points, but there is no mention of the city's Mayor, Teddy Kollek, and his historical role. This seems a strange omission: as Mayor of a united Jerusalem since 1967, Kollek, a leading liberal, has incessantly fought on three fronts: against the power politics of the Israeli Government; against Jewish religious obscurantism; and against the violence of the PLO. For his efforts on behalf of the Jerusalem Arabs, whose numbers have actually doubled during his period of office, Kollek was rewarded in last year's municipal elections when thousands of Arabs voted for him (against explicit PLO instructions to abstain) and made his election sure. One knows that in the PLO canon Kollek tends to be quite your Orwellian non-person. Even so, I should like to see a book written from an *Arab* viewpoint about Mayor Kollek's Jerusalem, realistically appraising the achievements (no doubt restricted) and the faults and facts of discrimination (no doubt many), as outlined some years back by the Israeli critic Meron Benvenisti in *Jerusalem: The Torn City* (1976).

**F**AILING SUCH straightforward realistic Arab appraisals, one has meanwhile to rely (as, indeed, Dr Rowley does) on those coming from within Israel by Israeli critics of the situation. To be welcomed in this context is Amos Oz's *In the Land of Israel*, a frank presentation of some current Israeli voices, and some Palestine Arab voices, too.<sup>4</sup> Oz, in his early forties, is a member of the old-fashioned socialist *kibbutz* Hulda, and is Israel's foremost novelist, with an international reputation. For this he has a surfeit of material. He has told how, one afternoon in October 1973, he was peacefully teaching in the *kibbutz* school and the next afternoon, as a reserve officer on the Golan Heights, he was manning an anti-tank gun in the terrifying chaos of the Yom Kippur war. Oz, an active member and TV speaker for *Sheli* (a small Israeli Left-wing, pacifist, idealistic political group), demanded from the start in 1967 that Israel should withdraw from the Arab West Bank and Arab Gaza.

Early last year, tired of preaching to the enlightened minority, he undertook a journey to discover "the other Israel" of his opponents or, indeed, political enemies—the ultra-conservative Orthodox Jews; the Oriental voters for Menachem Begin; the self-centred militant settlers on the West Bank, and also some Arab journalists in Jerusalem. The strength of his book is that in transcribing discussions and interviews, he has bravely lent his opponents his own emphatic novelist's voice, making the shock of some of their views all the more distinct.

The shocks begin right in the first chapter, where Oz visits the once secular and enlightened Jerusalem suburb where he had lived as a boy—and finds it occupied by Orthodox, anti-

Zionist Jews, with local Arabs on building sites, and trees being planted according to Mayor Kollek's plans. Oz shook his head over the primitive, tribal-minority views he encountered. At Beth Shemesh, a large settlement of Oriental Jews (the sons of former Arab-speaking Jewish immigrants from North Africa), Oz, an obvious member of the Russian-Jewish Israeli élite, found himself overwhelmed by a flood of grievances. The settlers complained that they were discriminated against by Israel's "Western" Jews; that they were hardly represented in Israel's power structure; above all, that they and their "oriental culture" were looked down upon.

It all sounded rather like complaints a visitor might hear from aggrieved black immigrants in Brixton, and like any well-meaning visitor to England's "deprived areas", Oz agreed that what the new immigrants required was not just work and housing and welfare, but to be accorded cultural respect—a civic dignity at all costs. With the Arab journalists he talked to in Jerusalem, there was agreement about Partition; but Oz realised that to his question about why they laid claim only to the West Bank, but not to other areas occupied by Israel, they could only answer ambiguously. Their theme was that they were seeking to define "the Palestinian personality" within the larger Arab personality. With all the differences, Oz saw a parallel between the Palestinian movement and the early Zionists.

Most revealing were Oz's arguments with his out-and-out political opponents, the often ultra-nationalist new Israeli settlers on the Arab West Bank. He asked why they offered the Arabs no independent status. The answer was that if there was any injustice (which they denied, but still, if there *was* injustice), where in the world could one see politics based not on force but on moral justice? In Soviet Russia and Poland, perhaps? Or in Afghanistan and Iran? In Viet Nam and the Third World, in the Arab dictatorships of Jordan, Syria, Iraq, etc., surrounding Israel?

THE CENTREPIECE OF *In the Land of Israel* is Amos Oz's reply to what he calls "this miserable argument"—that because others generally sinned, Jews should be allowed to sin likewise. In six eloquent pages he reaffirms his own faith in the tradition of Western liberal humanism within which legitimate Zionism had its birth, and his belief in an open, pluralist Israeli society. He demands that relations with the Arabs be conducted on the principle of doing-unto-others-what-we-would-have-them-do-unto-us; and he ends with his political hope that after the Begin-Sharon-Shamir interlude, the real, humanist Israel will re-establish itself.

Though not quite, perhaps. Oz is too knowledgeable to think that the earlier Israel, dominated by *kibbutzim* and socialists of European background, can be resurrected, and surely not now that the great faith of liberal humanism has been internationally eroded. As he says, it was probably over-optimistic to believe that, within two or three generations, masses of persecuted Jewish refugees could be turned into new citizens of a Middle Eastern state that would be "a light unto the nations." A more modest current hope was that Israel might become

"a warm-hearted, hot-tempered Mediterranean people that is gradually learning, through great suffering and in a tumult

<sup>4</sup> *In the Land of Israel*. By Amos Oz. Chatto & Windus, £8.95. Flamingo, £2.95.

of sound and fury, to find release both from the blood-curdling nightmares of the past and from delusions of grandeur, both ancient and modern; gradually learning to cling to what it has managed to build here over the course of a hundred difficult years. . . ."

To this one could add the view of an Arab editor Oz talked to in Jerusalem, who said about Partition: "There is justice here and

justice there, but here or there, over and beyond justice, there is reality."

On a mere basis of accepting reality, it would not be too difficult to make a Solomonic judgment to divide the land. But in the confused actual world, with lengthening Soviet shadows, and given the fierce tension between Israel and the US on one side and the Palestinians and the Arab dictatorships on the other, it will not be easy. Let's hope for compromise?

## New Light on the Roots of Radicalism

*The "'68 Generation" Analysed—By PAUL HOLLANDER*



ALMOST TWENTY YEARS HAVE PASSED since the beginning of the student protest movement and the upsurge of political radicalism in the United States (and, shortly thereafter, elsewhere in the West.) The passage of time has not provided a consensus in the interpretation of these events, nor have historians or social scientists found convincing and widely accepted explanations for them. What most people mean by "the sixties" started in 1964 and faded away

around 1972–73; not surprisingly, what has been written about this period tends to reflect an author's predisposition towards and experiences of it. In the United States at any rate, the closest thing to a conventional wisdom about radical student protest and the 1960s has been that it was a time of "lofty ideals", "youthful idealism", and an exhilarating if transient sense of "community."

If in retrospect the anti-intellectualism and intolerant self-righteousness of many of the student radicals (and of their mentors) have been deemed less appealing and acceptable than they seemed in the heat of the political action and drama, their attitudes and politics are still defended in much of the media and academia as honourable. Of all those reminiscing, in recollections and appraisals of the '60s, some were then in their prime, others outright young, in college or graduate school. Hence, in many minds, the politics of the 1960s and being young, youthful, and hopeful are irresistibly associated—an essential factor for the analysis of that era.

Whatever the "mature" judgment of history or social history, one thing already appears clear: that the *discontinuity* between the '60s and '70s (and early '80s) has been vastly exaggerated. The '60s were not some isolated eruption without antecedent and after-effects. Although Tom Wolfe was not incorrect in labelling the 1970s as the "Me Decade" in seeming contrast to the public-spirited '60s, the differences were not quite so pronounced, and were not simply matters of self-centredness-versus-public-spirited generosity. Individualism already flourished in the '60s, with millions of young people

insisting on "doing their own thing", bent on instant gratification, and propelled by a wide range of hedonistic impulses. It is possible to some degree to differentiate between the political and apolitical aspects of that decade by employing the concepts of cultural-versus-political radicalism; but the two strands were in practice intertwined. Some of the political militant radicals might well have been puritanical radicals, but most also found it important to smoke dope, listen to rock music and engage in some variant of unconventional sexual behaviour. It is the savage rejection of Western political institutions and social order *and* a determined individualism and hedonism that ties together the '60s and the '70s. The level of political activism has declined, but the attitudes and beliefs giving rise to such activism have clearly persisted into the 1980s.

Moreover, many wrong lessons have been learned. For instance, although it has become increasingly difficult to persist in entertaining illusions about the good-natured humanity and popularity of Uncle Ho's North Vietnamese Communists and the good life they brought to the masses, it is still obligatory in many circles to profess deep shame about the US opposing a régime that was to give us the "Boat People." Furthermore, losing a war against one of the most repressive and militaristic régimes in our times led many to conclude—including high-level policy-makers—that the US should retreat from virtually all global involvements and refrain from using military force to defend its interests. Today what President Carter scornfully called "the inordinate fear of Communism" has receded so far that American élites are no longer disturbed even by the rise of pro-Soviet and pro-Cuban régimes on their very doorstep, their "backyard" in Central America and the Caribbean. Many of the same activists who idealised the Viet Cong and the North Vietnamese now protest against American involvement in Central America and idealise the Marxist guerrillas of that region. "Grenada" becomes "another Viet Nam." Much of the media follows suit. On the American campuses the spirit of the 1960s persists in the virtual institutionalisation of estrangement, and in the habits of self-censorship exercised by professors and university administrators to avoid disruptions

by radicals. Hence the drastic constriction of subjects in courses of studies, in topics for visiting speakers, and of the whole range of controversial opinion in academia.

Accordingly Stanley Rothman's and Robert Lichter's *Roots of Radicalism*<sup>1</sup> is a major contribution to understanding the social and political movements and the spirit of the 1960s. There is nothing quite like this massive, ambitious, and thorough study, which combines and successfully integrates social-historical, sociological, social-psychological, and psychoanalytic perspectives in an attempt to come to grips with complex social phenomena. If read with an open mind it will change many preconceptions and stereotypes about the period and its major protagonists. It will also confirm certain impressions with a formidable array of data, both quantitative and qualitative.

The authors' research procedures included a survey questionnaire administered during 1971–73 at four large American universities, to over 1,100 students drawn from both random and probability samples; they were also given various "projective" tests. A small group of students were given additional "intensive clinical interviews" and further projective tests. In 1974–75 the authors administered similar questionnaires to 120 non-student radicals or former student activists (early New Leftists). These radical adults were compared to a sample of non-radicals—"business and professional people active in community affairs in a small northeastern city." There was a European counterpart to the American study, involving 230 students at two West German universities. The authors supplemented such data with an abundance of printed source materials about the period and its major protagonists (although they overlooked the writings of the American historian D. M. Potter, on alienation, changing authority relations, and problems of identity formation in recent times, which are highly relevant and complementary to their work).

It is impossible here to enumerate, let alone discuss, all the interesting and sometimes striking findings and propositions of this study and its sophisticated methodology. Broadly speaking, its major contributions lie in providing new insights and data about the relationship between politics and personality, family background and political-attitude formation, the sources of alienation and rejection of society, and attitudes towards political power, violence, and authority. It will surely compel a rethinking of the social history of the 1960s and of the conceptions of American society which arose at the time (and are still with us). More specifically, it represents a new departure in understanding the roots of both Jewish and non-Jewish radicalism, the differences and similarities between them, and how they were welded into a single (if ultimately fragmented) social-political movement.

Rothman and Lichter have not been the first to note that radical movements on the Left tend to attract a disproportionate number of Jews. Thus, for example, in 1970 a survey in the US found that 23% of all Jewish college students considered themselves "Far Left" when only 4% of Protestants and 2% of Catholic students defined themselves as such. They found in their samples that Jewish students "were three times as likely as

non-Jews to engage in frequent protests and twice as likely to lead or organize protests . . . by every measure we employed, Jews made up a majority of the New Left on these campuses."

Children of Jewish academics were found to be "by far the most radical group studied, much more so than the children of non-Jewish academics."

Even after the Protest Movement had peaked, Jews continued to be disproportionately represented during the 1970s in a wide variety of "counter-cultural" or "anti-Establishment" organisations such as the various anti-nuclear groups, anti-DNA-research, and Gay-Liberation movements, and were prominently represented in consumer groups, radical jurists, and in Left-wing research organisations (e.g. the Institute of Policy Studies). The combination of liberal-Left leanings and a concentration in certain key occupations and élite colleges and universities helps to explain the Jewish influence on the protest movements of the 1960s. (A 1968 study found that they accounted for 20% of the faculty in élite colleges and universities; 12% of the faculty of law schools, but 38% of élite law schools; while 25% of all social scientists were Jewish at élite schools.) Their role in the mass media was equally significant. A 1969 study found that 27% "of those working for the most influential media outlets . . . were of Jewish background." They also played an important role in the so-called underground press of the 1960s.

TWO MAJOR QUESTIONS must be asked about the protest movements of the 1960s, indeed about the protest movements of any period. The first is why they erupted at a particular time (given the endemic nature of *some* of the ostensible targets of protest). The second is what exactly motivated the participants, or in what measure one should look for explanation in the socio-political setting as distinct from certain shared characteristics of the protestors or revolutionaries. At both the beginning and the end of *Roots of Radicalism* the authors note—and it is gradually becoming more and more evident—that neither concern over "racial injustice" nor American involvement in the Viet Nam war by themselves offer satisfactory explanations of the 1960s, and especially of the steadily widening nature of the social criticism and estrangement which emerged.

A third major question about the radicalism and radicals of the '60s involves the sources, the genesis, of social criticism. Was it primarily a response to visible and self-evident evils of the socio-political environment? Or was there something in the nature, make-up, and the conditions of life of the critics? Considering the fact that, if not the absolute majority, the vanguard and leadership of the radical student movement were "children of privilege", it is certainly tempting to subscribe to the still widely accepted view that theirs was a wholly idealistic outpouring of action and emotion, since they themselves had little to gain either from the anti-War protest (they enjoyed college draft deferments) or from the struggle for civil rights (they were white) or from the protest against inequality (they were well-off).

The most influential assessments of the radical students of the period were highly positive and laudatory. They included

<sup>1</sup> *Roots of Radicalism: Jews, Christians, and the New Left*. By STANLEY ROTHMAN and S. ROBERT LICHTER. Oxford University Press, \$27.95, £21.50.

social-scientific studies which

"agreed that the student movement represented the best in their societies. . . . Researchers concluded early that radical students were dedicated to free speech and the rights of minorities. In many cases they came to this conclusion simply by asking students whether they believed in free speech. . . ."

Students were, however, rarely asked about their willingness to extend such rights to groups they despised on ideological grounds. Rothman & Lichter thoroughly examine and expose the weakness of many such studies carried out by authors sympathetic to the students in the first place (the best-known being Kenneth Keniston); and they point to the typical confusion of "idealistic political pronouncements with personality traits" characteristic of much of this research and of the liberal-Left perceptions of the student radicals. They note in passing that even the notorious Felix Dzerzhinski, the founder of the *Cheka* and of what subsequently became the *KGB*, was given to pronouncements about loving people and flowers. They might also have added Stalin's famous statement about the importance of carefully nurturing the masses like plants in a nursery.

Perhaps the most striking among their propositions—and one likely to provoke the greatest controversy—is that (among the Jewish radicals, at any rate) a major component of the idealism, the identification with "the underdog", rested on other than disinterestedly idealistic motives.

"Many white radicals supported 'black power' as a surrogate expression of their own hostility against the Establishment. The black underclass was finally fulfilling the role in which it had been long cast—as the vanguard of a revolt *against* the American Dream."

Nor was the phenomenon entirely new.

"The identification of some Jewish males and females with the Russian proletariat during the Soviet revolution, with Irish and Italian workers during the 1930s, and with the black underclass or Third World nations during the 1960s may have reflected motives beyond mere sympathy with the underdog . . . in both the 1930s and the 1960s many Jewish radicals were projecting their own needs and desires upon those groups."

They go on to observe:

"For some Jewish radicals, then, it is not only the oppression of Third World nations that attracts them as they move from cause to cause but, rather, the imagined virility of these nations and their powerful leaders . . . . As Abbie Hoffman described Fidel Castro: 'Fidel sits on the side of a tank rumbling into Havana. . . . The tank stops in the city square. Fidel lets the gun drop to the ground, slaps his thigh and stands erect. He is like a mighty penis coming to life. . . .'"

<sup>2</sup> Perhaps, in part, because it is in general so difficult for Americans to be critical of the young, because of the Rousseauian tendency in American culture to connect the young and youthfulness with many human virtues: idealism, nobility, selflessness, candour, purity, sincerity, authenticity. . . .

"As agents of the oppressed, and the justly violent oppressed in particular, they could treat their own aggressive urges as morally legitimate. . . . This identification helps [the radical] deny his own aggressiveness. He speaks and acts not for himself but for the worthy cause whose emissary he has become. . . . The projection of positive feelings onto the 'people' or 'the oppressed' is matched by the negative emotions projected onto the oppressors. . . ."

"Students, too, could be victims, could enjoy the righteousness that comes from persecution."

In short, "many radicals identified with black and third world militants as a psychological means of incorporating their power."

THESE FINDINGS, WHICH FLY IN THE FACE of the conventional wisdom about the motives of the young radicals,<sup>2</sup> derive from a more general and far-reaching theory of Jewish radicalism and of the authors' new perspectives on Jewish marginality and an associated estrangement. For one thing, unlike many other Western intellectuals they do not believe that alienation automatically confers a clearer view of social realities:

" . . . marginality can also serve to narrow one's vision. The oppressed may see only the worst side of a culture or social system."

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As the authors see it, then, political radicalism, as far as such American Jewish groups are concerned, stems from a broader and more basic hostility toward the social order, from a *predisposition* to reject a social system which defines them (or had defined them) as outsiders. This attitude explains both the attraction of universalistic ideologies such as Marxism, and the interest in other oppressed groups victimised by the system.

What gives such ethnic radicalism a unique character—besides the long history of Jewish persecution and marginality—is, according to Rothman & Lichter, the Jewish family structure and its impact on attitudes toward authority and the handling of aggression. Two aspects of the Jewish experience and character-formation appear to be of particular significance.

“Faced by persecutors too powerful to resist physically, Jewish families of the diaspora gradually came to place tremendous emphasis upon inhibiting the direct expression of physical aggression, particularly by male children. . . . Survival called for the creation of controls that became an integral part of character structure.”

The corresponding presence of weak fathers became typical of many Jewish families, and “Jewish radicals were the only group to perceive their families as matriarchal.”

In other words, the Jewish radicals’ identification with the tough Third World guerrillas (especially the Viet Cong), rioting Negroes, Black Panthers, and other victimised yet assertive groups, had a strong compensatory flavour. Some

groups like The Weathermen quite consciously cultivated toughness, and modelled (or imagined they had modelled) themselves on such groups. The investigations reported in this study revealed the radicals’ preoccupation with power and authority, again contrary to widespread belief among liberals that authoritarianism is the preserve of Right-wing elements.

“The traditional authoritarian [the image of which was enshrined in studies like that of Theodor Adorno’s *Authoritarian Personality*] deflects his hidden hostilities onto outsiders and outgroups. The inverse authoritarian [i.e., the New Left radical] unleashes his anger directly against the powers that be while taking the side of the world’s ‘victims’ and ‘outcasts’.”

Moreover, the widespread rejection of authority during the 1960s was highly *selective* rather than reflecting a generalised mistrust of *all* authorities. The same radicals who felt the mildest academic regulations intolerable and repressive (and parental authority altogether intolerable) were capable of extreme submissiveness toward groups, authority figures, and symbols that they admired, e.g., Blacks, the Viet Cong, Castro, Ho Chi Minh, Chairman Mao, and the repressive systems which they represented. As Rothman & Lichter shrewdly point out,

“Their temporary opposition to authority is part of a quest for a new authority that can command their wholehearted loyalty.”

Presumably an authority that is not hesitant, ridden with doubt, and lacking in strength and determination.

The broader implication is, of course, that political attitudes and beliefs often stem from non-political sources. None of this reduces the radicals to “a bunch of neurotics” or “spoiled brats” as the hostile stereotype had it. None the less, the findings make it clear that there is a difference between what is manifest and what is latent, between professed intentions and underlying motives. The authors, however, are fully aware that it is under particular historical circumstances that the psychological or personality variables assume causal significance in explaining mass movements:

“As political and cultural authority declined in the 1960s, so did the authority of the family and ego strength. Such is always the case in revolutionary (or pseudo-revolutionary) eras. At such times people seize the opportunity to act upon fantasies that they normally keep under control. All such fantasies contain universal elements, but their content is also partly determined by the cultural norms of the society in which the individual lives.”

Another major contribution of this volume is the systematic delineation and explanation of the differences between Jewish and non-Jewish radicals. Until now, the lack of a clear understanding of these highly patterned differences has led to wildly contradictory theories about radicalism and the part played in its development by family background. Here are some of the findings concerning these two groups:

“About half the Jewish students were raised in a liberal or leftist political milieu. . . . By contrast only 1% of the non-Jews rated their fathers as ‘Radical democrats,’ and not a

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single non-Jewish subject came from a socialist background."

"Jewish radicals were more than twice as likely as non-Jews to see radical publications [in their homes when they were growing up] while non-Jewish radicals were three times as likely as Jews to see conservative journals."

"Among Jews, the more radical the child, the more radical he or she perceived the father. Among non-Jews, this pattern was reversed: the more radical the child, the more conservative the father."

The inquiry into the family background of adult radicals turned up similar results, i.e., "the tendency of Jewish radicals to come from relatively politicized and leftist family backgrounds." Furthermore, "Jewish radicals [again, in the adult sample] were drawn primarily from intellectually and economically privileged backgrounds, while non-Jewish radicals were drawn more heavily from the bottom of the status hierarchy." There were also suggestive differences between Jewish and non-Jewish radicals in regard to participation in dangerous contact sports (Jewish participation being far more limited) and even in driving habits, with "non-Jewish radicals driv[ing] aggressively" whereas their Jewish peers were "less likely to use automobiles as instruments of self-assertion." All in all, it appeared from the accumulated data that

"Non-Jewish radicals seemed most likely to lack impulse control and to express aggression directly. Jewish radicals on the other hand were more timid physically. Their participation in the Movement may have provided a means of gaining strength by uniting with a powerful force."

Participation in the radical activism of the 1960s, therefore, had different functions and meanings for Jewish and non-Jewish radicals. Certainly Jews constituted initially the major force and much of the leadership in the Movement, diluted, as time went by, by the influx of the non-Jewish element. These two types of radicalism were in turn related to different patterns of child-rearing and family background, and after reading *The Roots of Radicalism* we can better comprehend the peculiarly personal element often observed in 1960s politics. I refer to the self-conscious orientation toward self-transcendence, self-expression, personal problem-solving through political action and immersion, and the conversion of public issues into highly personal concerns.

THE FINDINGS OF THE GERMAN STUDY were similar to the American, especially in regard to the development of radicalism among non-Jewish students. Thus,

"German radicals gave little indication of continuing family traditions of leftist ideology or behaviour. Instead they seemed to be actively rebelling against parents who were either genuinely conservative or insufficiently radical to satisfy their more fervent children. . . . The most important finding is that radicals had significantly greater power needs and conflicts than non-radicals. . . . The German radicals closely resembled their American non-Jewish counterparts in both their social diversity and psychological

homogeneity. They exhibited the same political and personal rejection of their parents and the same power complex which they apparently resolved by adopting the negative identity of the social outlaw. . . . An emotional alliance with the third world served the same needs some American radicals fulfilled by attaching themselves to the Black Panthers."

In conclusion the authors point out that the current "absence of overt protest has not meant a return to 1950s quietism. Elite campuses have become bastions of Left-liberal and radical social criticism. . . ." Moreover, many of the views and values of the 1960s have become institutionalised, and absorbed by groups other than college students as a general shift to the Left has occurred.

I should note, finally, that since the book was written, overt protest and street politics have revived—without quite reaching the level of the late 1960s and early '70s. This resurgence of protest, focused on US aid to anti-Communist régimes in Central America and on Western efforts aimed at restoring the military balance between NATO and the Soviet Union, is in some ways more ominous than that of the earlier vintage. Today the elements of wilful self-delusion are even stronger than they were in the 1960s, and the issues more singularly focused on international affairs. The upsurge of "Unilateralism" is a far more devastating symptom of Western alienation and loss of collective will than protest against American involvement in faraway Viet Nam. Likewise, treating the rise of pro-Soviet régimes in Central America as inconsequential is a related form of collective self-delusion rooted in wishful thinking. Until other writers, equally sensitive and thoughtful, follow Rothman & Lichter in examining carefully the current crop of activists (including members of the clergy), we shall not authoritatively know what blend of idealism, self-delusion, alienation or fear (this time of manifest Soviet power) presents itself as a wholly rational and highly ethical protest against "American imperialism . . . wasteful military expenditures . . . and the risk of nuclear war."



### Father William

I feel as fit as a thousand fleas  
and terribly strong at the knees—  
by no means lazy, lax or liverish  
but amorous, Cupid's bowlike,  
quiverish!

I stand a stallion, a thousand stoats  
could never put me off my oats—  
an old-style masher, Piccadillylike,  
the heat is on, all the girls get  
fillylike!

I roam at will like a roistering ram,  
sheep certainly know where I am!  
Like rats up drainpipes, philoprogenitive,  
I'm harsh and hard, never soft or  
lenitive!

*Gavin Ewart*

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## AUTHORS & CRITICS

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### Telling the Truth about Havelock Ellis

#### *A Literary Executor Protests—By FRANÇOIS LAFITTE*

I AM the “rational and very responsible executor” who, after the death of my mother, Françoise Delisle, enabled Vincent Brome to publish his *Havelock Ellis: Philosopher of Sex* (1979). Mr Brome is certainly justified in complaining (“Confessions of a Biographer”, ENCOUNTER, November 1983) that my mother treated him very badly when he was writing that book and that she abused her powers as copyright controller. But he spoils his case by overstatement, peevishness, factual inaccuracies, above all by refusing to acknowledge that he brought most of his troubles on himself. For brevity’s sake I confine myself to a few salient features of his article.

My mother, who (in Brome’s terminology) had been Ellis’s “mistress” for his last twenty-one (*not* thirty) years, was at the relevant time (1952 *not* 1953) a very deaf, increasingly crotchety, emotionally and financially insecure widow of 66, endowed with a florid hysteric personality, a prey to anxieties both genuine and irrational. When Brome consulted me about persuading her to give him facilities for his projected book, I firmly advised against it. He persisted in approaching her; she in turn consulted me, and I again advised against it.

I had three reasons. First, knowing her personality, I fully expected that, if she were to agree, the matter would end in disaster—as it did. Second, I judged it far too early to attempt a definitive biography, since too many people were still living about whose relations with Ellis the “truth” could be neither elucidated nor told. Any such study should wait at least until after my mother’s death. Third, having read his books on Attlee and Wells, I was far from convinced that Brome was in fact capable of producing the “serious and significant” work on Ellis he was promising—certainly not within two years and starting “cold.”

Both parties ignored my advice. My mother’s motive: despite her doubts she hoped Brome might prove to be a scholarly man prepared to commit all the effort and time needed to accomplish an authoritative work which would

revive interest in Ellis, so promoting the sale of his books on which her livelihood depended.

They first met on 6 March 1952. Pressed hard by Brome into a characteristic short-lived fit of initial enthusiasm, my mother stifled her misgivings and agreed (as he says) to allow him access to extensive unpublished material. Her enthusiasm waned rapidly. On 11 March she wrote:

“Mr Brome, who are you? and why do you want to write a biography of Ellis? . . . You drop out of the blue to ask my help. You require it over a piece of work in which I am not interested. . . . You come to me with your scheme of a biography, and you stick. I should have imagined that my first letter would have entirely put you off. I was amazed that it did not. It was my firm intention to convince you, when you came, that there is no call for another biography. It might have been best, for my peace of mind, if I had not seen you. . . . I need a month or so to think the matter over. I hoped you’d sense all this and open out. . . .”

She didn’t get her month. Undeterred by these danger signals, Brome replied on 16 March—only ten days after his first contact with an obviously confused and ambivalent old lady:

“After I had seen you and on the strength of what you said in your first letter—‘In about a month from now I shall place before you much of the material mentioned in our talk’—I agreed with my publishers that I should write the biography and my agent has negotiations going forward with a publisher in the United States. I also sent off letters to literary publications pointing out that I was about to embark on a biography of Havelock Ellis and should like to collect any available letters. It will be difficult to cancel out all this now.”

By 20 May, second thoughts prevailing, Mme Delisle wrote:

“My short acquaintance with you has given me the impression that you may, perhaps, be the right person to write a biography of Ellis, and one of some learning and weight, if you can wait for the proper time, i.e. after my death, when important documents will be available.”

By return of post Brome revealed more about his financial transactions:

“Your letter was a great shock. . . . I now find myself in an impossible position. I have worked day and night for four

FRANÇOIS LAFITTE, author of various works on social questions, was reared as Havelock Ellis’s adopted son and is now his literary executor. After eighteen years as “The Times” expert and leader writer on social policy issues he became Birmingham University’s first professor of social policy and administration, 1959–80. He has been chairman of the British Pregnancy Advisory Service since 1968.

months—reading far into the night—I have written many letters both to periodicals and correspondents, and given continuous thought to it; but worse than that I have agreements with two publishers in this country and America about the book, and have accepted and survived for the last four months upon their ‘advances’. Small though this money may be I should be forced to try and pay it back—alas a hopeless task—if I do not complete a biography in the next 18 months.”

THE WRANGLE dragged on with growing acrimony for two years longer, ending as Brome records. He emerges from it with no more credit than did my mother. Disregarding lesser misrepresentations, I must protest at his absurd theorising that my mother may have been motivated by a wish to conceal “some appalling secret hidden in her relations with Havelock Ellis” concerning the precise nature of his death. As evidence for this he adduces a jumble of selected facts, tittle-tattle, spiteful surmise and obscure innuendo.

1. There was no secret. Ellis’s prolonged terminal illness entailed great emotional strains and moral dilemmas for my mother. After his death she talked freely of all this—often at boring length—to anyone who would listen.

2. Lord Horder examined the ailing Ellis not long before his death in his eighty-first year, confirmed Ellis’s own diagnosis of his main disability, and suggested a possible treatment. Fifteen years later, Brome recalls, Horder told him that Ellis “could have been cured and that Madame Delisle refused to allow him to treat Ellis.” But I lived through these family events; Brome judges me “rational and very responsible”; and my own evidence (seen, heard, written) suggests something less sinister.

The octogenarian Ellis, well aware of the nature of his condition even before Horder’s confirmation, considered the suggested treatment and took his own decision not to undergo it. He was not browbeaten into that decision by anyone else, nor persuaded by anyone else against his better judgment into favouring freely chosen euthanasia for persons in his situation. “It is certainly possible”, Brome concedes, “that Ellis had tired of life and might have welcomed euthanasia”—but he was neither uneasy with the idea nor under pressure from Mme Delisle. His misgivings concerned her possible role in assisting his end and particularly her impulsive wish to go with him—in the outcome unnecessary worries. Twelve days before he died he wrote to Dr Winifred de Kok:

“I am one of the founders of the Voluntary Euthanasia Society. . . . At my age, of course, there are always new troubles developing . . . which do not admit of any treatment and become at last intolerable, so that life is no longer worth living. I am in no hurry for the moment. . . . In one sense the matter is far from urgent, but as regards *my feelings* it is very urgent. I need to feel that when the worst comes to the worst I have already in my hands a safe and easy method of escaping.”

3. Brome’s memory of what people told him is any event

faulty in several respects. From his book we learn that Margaret Sanger, visiting the ailing Ellis in 1938, “left a record” that “a very distressed Madame Delisle burst out in anguish to her one day: ‘I can’t stand it any more. He won’t seem to die.’” But (a) Sanger left no such record. This is simply a piece of gossip passed on to Brome by Janet de Selincourt in 1953; and she was hardly a disinterested observer since her husband’s passionate love affair with my mother. And (b) his ENCOUNTER article has a revised version of my mother’s remarks: “It’s terrible—terrible—he won’t die. I can’t stand it any more.” Does Brome actually remember what Janet told him that Margaret told her that Françoise had said? And what does it matter anyway?

4. Janet also told him (the article records) that Margaret later said: “I am disgusted with Françoise and do not want to see her again.” Yet not long after Margaret wrote to Françoise: “Just seeing you and Havelock and knowing he is in your loving care is a load removed” (9 October 1938). And immediately after his death she wrote from New York: “Oh Françoise dear, why don’t you come over and visit us here for a month. It would be such a comfort to us all to have you here. . . .” (11 July 1939).

WHILE MY MOTHER LIVED Brome’s manuscript was, as he says, shelved indefinitely. She died unexpectedly, aged 88, on 5 December 1974 in circumstances requiring a coroner’s investigation. On the very next day, with impeccable timing, Brome wrote to me: “I am still asked when I propose either repaying the advances I received from publishers for the Havelock Ellis biography or turning in the manuscript.” He wished to meet me “to discuss the situation.” I read his letter on returning from the coroner’s office. I had to arrange a funeral and to start on the gargantuan task of sorting out the chaos of my mother’s financial, tax, and literary affairs, including the Ellis papers still in her possession. Under no obligation to rescue Brome from his largely self-generated difficulties, I deferred his business until my own difficulties abated.

Eventually, having read and not been impressed by his shelved manuscript, in February 1976 I permitted him to use all the quotations I found therein, but no fresh ones. Having reflected on the honourable course for an executor in my position, I added:

“I have concluded that there is no reason why I should express any view on judgments and surmises contained in your text, or on omissions, factual errors or the need for revision in the light of later published material. So I confine myself to saying that it seems to me that, as it stands, what you have written adds very little to public knowledge or understanding of Ellis.”

In fairness, Brome revised and notably improved his text before its publication in 1979.

Dealings with another biographer, Phyllis Grosskurth, were very different. She first indicated her interest in 1963. When she seriously proposed a fresh Ellis biography in 1970 she was already well read about her subject. She accepted with grace my mother’s and my own decision to afford no access to papers

during my mother's lifetime. She had the tact to reopen the question, not the day after Françoise died, but 22 months later. Among several others who approached me she stood out as a scrupulous, knowledgeable, versatile and sensitive scholar, capable of combining her own (not my) well-reasoned assessment of Ellis's work (in literature, sexual psychology, social affairs and much else) with that free hand in exploring his private life that it was in my power to grant her. I am at a loss to understand Brome's remark that "the story of the long drawn out negotiations between Professor Grosskurth, myself and the executors is a book in itself." The executors' dealings with Professor Grosskurth were not long drawn out and could not have been more harmonious. In this instance at least, "the difficulties of telling truths" exist only in the mind of Mr Brome.

## A Reply

*By Vincent Brome*

IT IS A LAW, universally acknowledged, that executors have a monopoly of truth when they seek to preserve the image of a relative. Professor Lafitte's protestations notwithstanding, a whole book would be required to disentangle truth from half truth in the negotiations between himself, Madame Delisle, Phyllis Grosskurth and myself, but four main points emerge from his marathon letter.

1. Professor Lafitte's account of the precise nature of our negotiations is largely accurate but he omits the fact that he entertained me on several occasions and ceaselessly answered questions about Havelock Ellis which gave the impression that he not only endorsed the undertaking but was willing to collaborate. Moreover, half-way into the work the complications created by his mother drove him to elaborate a tripartite agreement between the three of us which explicitly spelt out a *modus operandi* for the whole undertaking.

2. Far be it from me to claim scholarly distinction but the reviewers in London found it difficult to distinguish between the merits of Professor Grosskurth's biography and my own, and no less a critic than Charles Rycroft preferred it as a general account of Ellis's life. Professor Donald MacRae wrote in the *New Statesman*: "This is a good book. . . . clear and just and based upon deep knowledge. . . . I feel how much we need a critical history of the late Victorian and Edwardian intellect; its author will be in debt to Mr Brome." Philip Toynbee described it as "thorough, carefully researched, well written and skilfully planned", and Professor H. J. Eysenck as "a well written and instructive biography." Other quotations would make a tedious recital.

3. With exemplary tact, out of consideration for his mother's memory, I carefully avoided in my biography any mention of her appalling behaviour, and even now I still cannot directly

describe what I think took place in the suicide pact between Havelock Ellis and Françoise Delisle. I recommend anyone interested to read the relevant passages in my ENCOUNTER article and draw their own conclusions. Maybe Janet de Selincourt was an interested party but then so is François Lafitte. As for Lord Horder, he specifically asked me to put the record straight with a picture so damning that with even more exemplary restraint I excluded it from both my biography and my article. It was a picture of Lord Horder visiting Havelock Ellis one afternoon and having—more or less—to force his way into a dirty and chaotic room, where the blinds were drawn, while Madame Delisle violently protested and completely refused to carry out any of the remedies he recommended. Horder stressed the fact that whenever he asked Ellis a question she refused to allow him to answer and answered for him. "She seemed to have him in her power and completely dominated him."

4. In the end, vilification characterised much of Madame Delisle's attitude towards me, but matters were very different with Professor Grosskurth. Conceivably Professor Lafitte is unaware that there were personal reasons which introduced special complications into our rivalry about the biography.

For the rest Professor Lafitte complains that I wrote to him too soon after his mother's death and/or the inquest which followed. I was under the impression that ten days elapsed between her death (not the inquest) and my approach, and I was unaware that an inquest was necessary. I have been unable to check these facts but, on Professor Lafitte's account, my haste was inexcusable. However, I had been waiting twenty years to publish my book as a result of his mother's behaviour.



## Beginning

Through the architecture of trees,  
branches fly in buttresses,  
light filters traceries  
from the vault of foliage.

All the unformed fingers  
have opened;  
blossom clusters glide,  
high Gothic crests.

A congregation of two  
walking the transepts;  
old sacristans in the tide  
of wanderings and questions

we follow the central aisle  
in the cathedral of leaves  
to a nave of meditation,  
new to the ceremony  
of plumage in the Spring.

*Deirdre Shanahan*

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# FILM

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## Looking for “Hollywood”

*Letter from New York—By RICHARD GRENIER*



ONCE UPON A TIME there was a place called Hollywood. It was never very clear, even in the American mind, just where in California this mythic place was. Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer did nothing to clarify things when for years it presented its films with the legend *MADE IN HOLLYWOOD, U.S.A.*, as if it were some sort of separate community, floating off in the clouds perhaps, whereas Hollywood was only a grubby district of a well-known city named Los Angeles, and Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer was not situated in Hollywood at all but in a rather remote suburb named Culver City. Yet although the major studios had begun fleeing congested Hollywood as early as the 1920s, the word “Hollywood” had already achieved such magical power that “Hollywood reporters” of that period, whose work consisted principally of reprocessing studio hand-outs about the stars, continued to dateline their stories “Hollywood”, as if they were despatches from fairyland—which, in a sense, they were. Today, with decades of tinsel stripped away, the name continues, but in a largely generic sense, meaning simply the American film industry. Most of the biggest stars now have homes in New York. You can shoot a film almost anywhere in the USA. But if you make a film even in Beaufort, South Carolina, it is still a “Hollywood movie.”

Even in the early mythic days, people were clear enough about the legend. Hollywood had “moguls”, domineering men of measureless wealth whose sense of the population’s hopes and dreams enabled them to create a “dream factory” of a power unrivalled anywhere in the world. Hollywood had its lustrous “stars.” These stars in their private lives had “romances” which seemed of a different nature from the romances of common mortals. The public regularly confused their private lives with their screen personae partly because, once their screen personalities were established, only with rare exceptions were they allowed by the studios to play roles which

might make them seem in any significant way different. It was almost inadvertently, in those days, that Hollywood produced a highly parochial product. Clark Gable, Gary Cooper, Spencer Tracy, Katharine Hepburn, and Joan Crawford never played foreigners. They rarely played in films with a foreign setting. When David O. Selznick, the producer of *Gone With the Wind*, arrived even in Atlanta, Georgia, for the grand opening of his film, he was momentarily panic-stricken to note that the inhabitants spoke with a highly peculiar accent, which (since he had never visited Georgia, the setting for his story) had somehow never before been brought to his attention. The fact that in the movie Clark Gable sounded as if he, too, had never set foot in Georgia did nothing to impede the film’s success, however, neither in Atlanta nor anywhere else in the world.

It was escapist stuff, by and large. Few would question this any more. The mysterious element is how escapist entertainment so narrowly conceived, tailor-made to fit the taste and usually the dreams of the American people, should have had such *global* appeal. A conclusion hard to resist is that America itself had something to do with it. The films might have been dross, but American dreams, one suspects, were the dreams of much of the world. And America itself, perhaps, represented a kind of world dream. This intercontinental evocative power was, unfortunately, not reciprocal. With the exception of movie adaptations of romantic or popular English novels familiar from even a Brooklyn childhood, the interest of the American film-going public in the universe beyond its shores was next to nil. Proceeding from the same state of mind as the political isolationism of the period, US movie-goers were almost entirely self-absorbed. With all the revolutionary transformations that have swept over Hollywood since World War II, this, curiously, has not changed.

One would never realise the fact from reading film reviews in the *New York Times*, *Time*, and *Newsweek*, but today, in this age of the “world cinema”, foreign movies, even including those in English from Britain and Australia, account year in year out for only something like 1% of the American movie market. And this despite the fact that over the last thirty years or so the US film audience, in the language of the advertising industry, has gone radically “up market.”

RICHARD GRENIER is a New York film critic, writing regularly for “Commentary.” His novel, “The Marrakesh One-Two”, has recently been published in the USA, and has won critical acclaim. Macdonald are publishing it this Spring in London.

FOR THE MOST RADICAL overnight change in the post-World War II American cinema occurred in the 1949–1950 season with the

arrival of television. One year some 90 million Americans bought tickets to go to the movies every single week, and the following year the figure was some 45 million. This figure continued to sink over the coming decades, until now, allowing for the growth of the population, the movie audience represents roughly 10% of the pre-television film public. Relatively speaking, compared for example to the television audience, this film-going public represents an élite—affluent, educated, young, vigorous—making the US cinema the “class act” of the American popular arts. The remarkable fact is that with all this “up-grading” of the movie audience, and constant dragooning on the part of the prestige press to see the films of Ingmar Bergman, Federico Fellini, François Truffaut, Jean-Luc Godard, Eric Rohmer, and, lately, Werner Herzog and Rainer Maria Fassbinder, the public for these European directors remains microscopic (and for the Germans more microscopic than most). Americans of Italian descent, a generation on, do not see Italian films. Americans of Polish descent do not see Polish films. The colossal number of Americans of German descent (according to the latest census report the largest group of all, more numerous than English, Scotch, and Welsh combined) would never have it cross their minds to see a German film just because they themselves had German names. There is something about the American experience, the notion of a new life, in a dynamic society, in a new land dominating an entire continent, that seems to cut off immigrants to the US from the lands of their ancestors, subjecting them to the same insularity and continental absorption that has assimilated all the waves of immigrants before them.

**A**FTER THE LOSS of the truly mass audience to television, the most important change to have come over Hollywood in the last quarter-century was the break-up of the “studio system.” Studios—if the word is still appropriate—are now principally organisations that finance and distribute. The creation of a new film is now generally the function of an independent producer, who puts together his “package” of star, director, and story. There is some debate in America as to who really wields the power within this “package”—and in fact it varies considerably. A particularly strongly placed producer, or a “star” director (Steven Spielberg, for example), could be the power centre, but normally it is the star actor. He, after all, is the “bankable” part of the package. It is on the strength of his name, and his allegiance to the project, that the studios, banks, or investors advance the money for the project. If Robert Redford or Clint Eastwood wants to make a movie, the movie gets made. Eastwood, for one, has simplified things by becoming the producer and director as well as star of all his own films.

So Hollywood now makes the movies, not that the “moguls” want to make, but that actors want to make. This has led to a sharp displacement of the sensibility, and the politics, of American films. A minority of American stars (Eastwood and Sylvester Stallone are the most obvious examples) are triple-dyed patriots of the old school, the present-day equivalents of the John Waynes, Jimmy Stewarts, and Jimmy Cagneys of

earlier days. But the great majority of present-day stars are left-liberals of one sort or another (Robert Redford, Jane Fonda, Paul Newman, Meryl Streep . . .), possessors of an “artistic” temperament, who feel the same alienation from the “bourgeois” society that most artists have felt since the onset of the Romantic period. Almost entirely uninfluenced by Europe or European cinema, reacting in large degree to historical domestic events such as Watergate and the Viet Nam War, they have carried American films as far to the left as the traffic would bear—and frequently somewhat farther. An idiosyncrasy of the present period, it must be said, is that a frankly anti-American film such as *Missing*, in flat contradiction to the findings of the US Senate’s investigation (Frank Church’s Committee) yet financed and distributed by Universal Pictures of Hollywood, should have an extremely mediocre career in the US itself—but recoup its investment through the film’s success abroad. For foreign sales now account for half the revenues of American movies.

The situation is nothing if not anomalous. For if anti-Americanism is a profitable US export product, so is American patriotism. The most successful Hollywood film during the fall of 1982 was Sylvester’s Stallone’s *First Blood*, about a US Green Beret, mistreated after his return home from Viet Nam, who complains bitterly that he and his comrades in arms had fought to win, “*but somebody back home didn’t want us to win. . .*” It was also vastly successful abroad. The following fall (as part of the “re-McGovernisation” of liberal Democrats) Hollywood produced a rash of unprecedentedly outspoken *anti-American* movies, ranging from *Daniel*, dedicated to the proposition that Julius and Ethel Rosenberg were innocent of espionage on behalf of the Soviet Union, to *Under Fire*, whose heroes are journalists who deliberately falsify their reporting from Nicaragua to help bring the Sandinistas to power. Both films were utter fiascos in the United States, but, like *Missing*, they might be bailed out by finding an enthusiastic audience overseas. The latest development, at Christmas 1983, is that the number-one film in the US, sweeping the country from coast to coast, is Clint Eastwood’s *Sudden Impact*, the latest in the *Dirty Harry* series whose theme of vigilante justice has been giving the left-liberal American Civil Liberties Union fits for years.

If one realises that both the people who made *Under Fire* and the people who saw it (or, generally, did not see it) know next to nothing about the Sandinistas, it is apparent that none of these films proceeds from anything but inward-looking American attitudes. The US cinema has gone from a mass to an “élite” form. Filmmakers have gone from being journeymen to being “artists.” US movies export well whether they are *pro-* or *anti-American*. Yet they are as totally absorbed with American society today as they were in 1930. To judge from the US cinema, American “isolationism”—whether of the right or of the left—is far from dead. Europeans should not judge Americans from the usual visitors they see. The average American has little desire to leave his country at all. And studies have shown that if he were forced to do so he would go to—Australia, which in moments of fond reverie he sees as “the last frontier”, remote from the Old World, remote from entanglements, entrapments, alliances, squabbles: a new America.

**A** PERHAPS EVEN MORE RADICAL overnight change in the American cinema took place in a period earlier than the one I have been considering—a change of greatest concern to British audiences.

In 1927, 57 years ago, at a moment now almost lost in the mists of time, Hollywood made its first “talking picture.” It is not widely remembered that the silent film, although it produced some of the greatest and most germinal figures in film history, was restricted in its audience largely to the uneducated working classes, the “great unwashed”, denizens of penny arcades and readers of Penny Dreadfuls. The brilliant careers of D. W. Griffith and Henry James (strange to relate) overlapped chronologically, but their audiences hardly overlapped at all. People who read James’ *The Golden Bowl* rarely saw Griffith’s *Broken Blossoms*, and precious few of the colossal mobs which saw Griffith’s *Birth of a Nation* could even have heard the name of Henry James.

With the “talkies”, however, the cinema captured the genteel middle classes. Able to use words now as well as visual images, films could tell stories of some complexity, and fell voraciously upon the treasure trove of “classic” literature. “Classic”, for the American middle classes of that period, meant the English novel, roughly from Sir Walter Scott to Kipling, and Hollywood promptly began to mine Dickens, the Brontë sisters, Thackeray, Robert Louis Stevenson. It will seem odd in view of the cultural self-absorption that I have already referred to, but US school curricula in the 1930s and earlier contained very few American writers. Herman Melville, Walt Whitman, Stephen Crane, and even Hawthorne and Mark Twain (although Twain’s books were great best-sellers) were relatively little read in American schools; for it was the view of genteel school-teachers of the time that students reading English literature should read *English* writers—as clear an acknowledgement as one is likely to get that despite the eruptions of 1776 and 1812, and later isolationism, Great Britain was acknowledged as America’s “parent culture.” Schoolchildren with names like Shultz, Weinberger, and Meese (German), or Reagan and Regan (Irish)—I choose the names at random—read the novels of Charles Dickens in school like everyone else. This almost unconscious assumption that America felt itself part of the Anglo-Saxon culture, which has been elaborately documented, played a powerful role in determining the actions taken by the United States in both World Wars I and II.

At the advent of the talking picture, therefore, in its rush to provide “classic” works for its new audience, Hollywood produced *David Copperfield*, *Tale of Two Cities*, *Wuthering Heights*, *Jane Eyre*. Carried along by this anglophilic wave were the works of more popular English writers, many of them also hugely successful: *Of Human Bondage* (Somerset Maugham); the Sherlock Holmes series (A. Conan Doyle);

*Rebecca* (Daphne du Maurier); *Beau Geste* (P. C. Wren); and tales like *Charge of the Light Brigade* (Tennyson) and *Gunga Din* (Kipling). For the purposes of playing the leading roles in most of these films, Hollywood imported what amounted to a resident stock company of English players. The list is long and eminent: Ronald Coleman, Leslie Howard, Charles Laughton, Robert Donat, C. Aubrey Smith, Claude Rains, Errol Flynn (Australia), Basil Rathbone, David Niven, George Sanders, Ray Milland, and many others. There can be no question whatever that as World War II approached, for example, the US cinema, whose influence at that time reached into every corner of the land, reinforced the notion that between the British and American peoples there was, to say the least, a “special relationship.”

THIS RELATIONSHIP no doubt still exists, but as of some years now, it has been getting little support from American movies. Hollywood now makes precious few films set in Britain, and consequently no longer needs a resident stock company of British actors. Those Britons working in Hollywood today are typically directors—who make films on entirely American subjects, and contemporary subjects at that. In 1969 John Schlesinger directed the watershed *Midnight Cowboy*. In consecutive years Ridley Scott made the giant money-spinner *Alien*, and Michael Apted made *Coalminer’s Daughter*, based on the life of US folk singer Loretta Lynn (for which Sissy Spacek won an Academy Award). On a substantially lower economic level, Tony Richardson recently directed *The Border* (between Texas and Mexico), and Frank Roddman *The Lords of Discipline*, about a military school in America’s Southland.

The cause, again, goes back at least partly to schooling, and seemed to unfold in two phases. *First*: English literature was displaced to an appreciable extent by American literature, a nationalistic move which gathered strength in the 1950s. And *second*, an even more powerful phenomenon of the 1960s, extending well into the ’70s: interest in the classics, history, and the past at large, dropped precipitously. In view of the appalling decline in educational performance in US schools in recent years, strong, if uneven, efforts are now being made to reverse this trend; but solid results have yet to become evident.

My unsupported instinct is that the sense of nationhood has far from disappeared in the American people. But we are left for the moment—with Hollywood as with most US moviegoers—with an America, still self-absorbed, still unaware of the world beyond its borders, floating in a timeless American present. The only problem here is that the fuzzily perceived outside world, given time, will eventually almost certainly obtrude. Some would say it is obtruding already. And we might soon see whether Meryl Streep’s America or Clint Eastwood’s America will prevail.

## Life & Letters Today

**LONG WORDS:** Carol Bellamy says she talks fast. That may be what kept the New York City Council president sprinkling jargon liberally through Saturday's "Municipal Priorities" conference. "Redistributive" policies that shift wealth were big, as was "internationalization" of the city economy. And "infrastructure" remained a favourite.

"Infrastructure," Miss Bellamy said, "is the longest word any of us in politics have learned to say, so we say it a lot."

NEW YORK TIMES

**THE HIGHER LIT. CRIT.:** ENCOUNTER is even more difficult to obtain. "It's a cultural monthly", I usually explain, standing at the newstand opposite Eros [writes Robert Silver]. I stress the word "cultural". "Culture", as Raymond Williams writes, has a multiplicity of meanings. In the minds of men who sell newspapers next to Piccadilly Circus, it suggests flagellation mixed up with motorbikes. If, in your language, Berlin is chiefly notable for leather, and Steiner the man who replies to readers' letters in "Penthouse", then ENCOUNTER figures on the horizons of your world-picture as a dating bureau for frustrated singles.

LITERARY REVIEW

**ADVICE:** I know [Alan Watkins writes] that the Labour Party leader, Neil Kinnock, dislikes any suggestion that he should copy Labour Prime Minister Harold Wilson in any way; but there are worse models. What he did in Opposition was deliver a succession of solid speeches on what a Labour Government would do when it came to power. These turned out to be pretty misleading, I agree, but no matter. They got him taken seriously as a politician of weight and consequence.

THE OBSERVER



sometimes confused by the old names and frightened off by the jargon."

DAILY MAIL

**DOWN-TO-EARTH:** British Airways is to make it easier for passengers who want to buy cheap tickets.

Bargain hunters have had to ask for tickets with names like "Off-Peak . . . SuperPex . . . Night Scot . . . Instant Purchase Excursion . . . Snowflake . . . and Guaranteed Standby."

From next month, all a passenger seeking a cheap ticket will have to ask for is "a Saver."

British Airways marketing director Jim Harris said: "Research showed that our customers were

**FROM BAD TO VERSE:** Strongman Ian Jackson won't forget the night he threw the poet Robert Graves out of a party.

All who were there agree it was a most undignified exit for the former Oxford University professor . . . straight through the plate glass window of a ground floor common room. To round it off the 6ft university shot-and-discus champion hurled himself out of the window too.

But Ian's strong-arm treatment made little impression—just a few minor marks on the bust of the venerable poet.

Ian, a post-graduate research chemist at St John's College, now faces the possibility of being landed with a £200 bill for damages to the window. He could also be disciplined by the university authorities.

Ian's friends say he simply stumbled against the bust. But as he waits to learn his punishment he may ponder on the poet's own words in Robert Graves' "The Halls of Bedlam":

To be mad is not easy,  
Will earn him no money,  
But a niche in the news.

SUNDAY MAIL

**NEOLITHIC MAN:** An "Automatic Speech Recogniser" developed by the Japanese company Nec was unveiled in Geneva yesterday. Using the system, two people can communicate through a computer even though they speak different languages.

The prototype on display is able to translate from English, Spanish, and Japanese. So far it has a limited vocabulary of 150 words.

DAILY TELEGRAPH

**SAFE JOKES:** The one point of interest of Mr Denis Healey's speech in the House of Commons yesterday was when he doubted the classical scholarship of President Reagan. He noted that the British Government had asked President Reagan to warn General Galtieri that an Argentinian invasion of the Falklands was "a casus belli". Mr Healey thought this "a phrase not safe to entrust to President Reagan."

British politicians [Frank Johnson writes] only make jokes at the expense of an American President when they are in Opposition.

THE TIMES

**UNUTTERABLE:** Her face changes from moment to moment, protean and anonymous. Debra Winger talks like that, fulminating with half-sentences that are all attitude and no point of view, a San Fernando Valley Girl who sits with her toes pointing at each other and her hands jammed between her knees. There hasn't been a voice like this in the movies since the young Lauren Bacall: a sweet husk with a descant squeak she could call dogs with. It's reedy, like there's a little dust on the needle—plaintive and cozy, droppin' the G's, clangin' through the flat Southern California vowels, she's all gotta and gonna, with a fabulous uhhunhaha laugh rising out of it.

WASHINGTON POST

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# LETTERS

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## Timerman & Kirkpatrick

MAY I return to the themes of two personalities about whom there has been much discussion and controversy in your pages? I refer to Ambassador Jeane Kirkpatrick (and her views on "authoritarianism" and "totalitarianism", explored by George Urban in the November ENCOUNTER) and to Timerman (and the exchanges between Conor Cruise O'Brien and his critics in ENCOUNTER, January and April 1983).

As an Israeli citizen living in Jerusalem (if as an "émigré"), Timerman wrote a damning book about Israeli politics. But before that, as an Argentinian newspaper editor, working in Buenos Aires, he wrote a damning book about Argentine politics.<sup>1</sup>

Timerman had been arrested, jailed and tortured and was finally let out of his Argentine prison cell and sent into exile. He came to the United States, where he immediately undertook a campaign against those who argued that there is a difference between an authoritarian régime and a totalitarian régime.

The argument of people like Jeane Kirkpatrick was that while no dictatorship could be preferred to a parliamentary democracy, in the real world authoritarianism is not the worst. As Edmund Burke once said: "Too often political choice is between the disagreeable and the intolerable." A military dictatorship like Argentina's can be reformed, can be altered, can even be overthrown because military juntas are not forever. Proof? Franco died. Spanish democracy followed. Salazar died. Portuguese democracy followed. The Greek colonels were overthrown. Greek democracy followed. And now Argentina.

When has a Communist dictatorship been overthrown? Communist dictatorships, once entrenched, as in East Germany, Hungary, Czechoslovakia or Poland, never surrender their monopoly of power. (Fortunately for the people of Grenada, that dictatorship didn't get a chance to become entrenched.)

THAT IS WHY an authoritarian dictatorship, always an evil, is a better bet for a democratic future than a communist totalitarian dictatorship. As Ambassador Kirkpatrick put it the other day:

"With authoritarianism, there is the distinct possibility of liberalisation of a régime from within. In fact, one might say that every democracy has emerged from what was authoritarianism. A totalitarian system can only be reformed from with-

out. There can be no liberalisation or democratisation from within a totalitarian régime except by external intervention—Nazi Germany or Grenada."

It is likely that the military junta that has just seized power in Nigeria from a democratically elected government will some day be replaced by another democratic government. Were Fidel Castro to die tomorrow it is doubtful that a democratic government would follow. Soviet military and police power in Havana is so overwhelming that were anything to happen to Fidel, the totalitarian dictatorship which has ruled Cuba for almost a quarter-century would most likely go on as before, just as it has in post-Stalin Russia.

The authoritarian death squad is no worse than the totalitarian death squad and to say this is not to say that you are lining up with the ultra-right as the lesser of two evils. That is why a non-Communist El Salvador is to be preferred to a pro-Communist Nicaragua. The death squads of El Salvador have no political immortality, and they will go if we can strengthen the democratic element in El Salvador who dared to vote in a genuine democratic election against the Communist Left despite the campaign of terror and intimidation against the voters. Can the same be said of Nicaragua's death squads?

AND WHERE IS the proof of these propositions? In the brief news report that Jacobo Timerman is to return to Argentina because he said, the government was

democratically elected and he now has "the chance to prosecute my torturers."

Would he have had that chance if a Communist régime had taken over from the military? Would he have dared to return to Argentina if its new rulers were allies of the Kremlin, as are the Ortegestas of Nicaragua? How many Soviet dissidents returned to the USSR after Stalin's death believing that they would have a chance to prosecute their torturers, or returned after Khrushchev's ouster, or after Brezhnev's passing? How long would Mr Timerman last in a Communist Argentina? About as long as most of Fidel Castro's revolutionary allies lasted before they were purged, jailed, exiled or executed.

Jacobo Timerman can thank his lucky stars that Argentina was in the hands of generals who lacked the ruthless totalitarian fibre which Stalin and his successors have demonstrated is the only way to perpetuate totalitarian power. Mr Timerman could now even surrender his Israeli citizenship, since the Israeli government so displeased him during his residence in that beleaguered country. He might even want to consider an apology to Ambassador Kirkpatrick for maligning her credentials as a sturdy democrat just because she uttered a truth which Mr Timerman, by his return to Argentina, has just confirmed.

ARNOLD BEICHMAN

Hoover Institution  
Stanford, California

## An Exchange about Michael Straight

IN CONNECTION with the article by Sidney Hook, "The Incredible Story of Michael Straight" (ENCOUNTER, December 1983), we have received a communication from a London solicitor acting on behalf of Mr Straight. He sets out a number of complaints—about alleged errors, exaggerations, and inconsistencies, as well as some "defamatory" remarks. He requests that we express regret for being "a party to the circulation of unwarranted assertions about Mr Straight", and offer an apology.

We have reread Professor Hook's article with the finest of magnifying glasses, and satisfied ourselves that these complaints are neither accurate in their textual references to Professor Hook's argument, nor warranted in the light of the personal story which Michael Straight tells in his autobiographical memoir *After Long Silence* (Collins, London; Norton, New York, 1983).

The solicitor's letter stated that his client "wishes to give ENCOUNTER the opportunity of allowing him to exercise the right of reply", but proposed that this should take the form, not of a rebuttal by Michael Straight, but of a reprint of the article by Gus Tyler (originally published in the New York *New Leader*) which Professor Hook had referred to as "a strange encomium." This seemed to us ill-

advised and inappropriate. The rules of argumentation, *pro et contra*, and indeed the ethics of controversy, call for a more direct and straightforward confrontation of ideas, attitudes, and evidence. We therefore suggested that Mr Straight, or a friend, or indeed his solicitor, should write an article setting out the case for the defence. They declined.

We are, consequently, convinced that we ought to proceed in our usual editorial fashion by printing Mr Straight's case, as his solicitor presented it, and then giving Professor Hook his own right to reply. Which is what we do in the following.

THE EDITORS

## The Defence

"PROFESSOR Hook alleges that Mr Straight was 'complicitous in the hundreds of deaths that were contrived by his erstwhile comrades' (presumably Blunt and Burgess). There is no evidence published either by Professor Hook or by anyone else that Blunt or Burgess ever contrived to cause any deaths let alone that Mr Straight was 'complicitous' in them. The footnote to the article publishes the assertion of Roy

<sup>1</sup> See the critical portrait by James Neilson, "The Education of Jacobo Timerman" in ENCOUNTER, November 1981.

Medvedev that Donald Maclean gave secret information to the Russians during the Korean War but my client had no connection with Donald Maclean. He had never met him nor heard of him and the allegation that my client has some responsibility for the deaths of thousands of his fellow citizens in Korea is quite disgraceful.

The article is also full of assertions that my client is a liar. The headlines make the point effectively when they say that his story is not to be believed and suggests that he is being dishonest. I do not propose to set out all the instances in which my client is accused of telling lies but some examples will suffice.

Professor Hook says quite plainly that he does not believe Mr Straight's account of the state of his mind when he was told that he had to return to America. Although there is not a shred of evidence for the allegation that Mr Straight believed Blunt's statement that Stalin had reviewed his appeal to be left alone, Professor Hook embellishes the allegation by attributing to Mr Straight a state of euphoria. This is utter nonsense and it is cruel and vicious nonsense. The book on the contrary makes it perfectly clear and at considerable length that my client was appalled by the assignment and that he did all he could to get out of it.

Professor Hook then suggests that Mr Straight remained as a 'mole' within the ranks of the US government and that his value to Moscow was on a level of that of Richard Sorge.

My client is again accused of lying when he says that the only information which he gave to Michael Green were his own appraisals of the political situation. Professor Hook has no evidence for this libel because none exists. The truth of the matter is as recorded by my client."

## Hook's Reply

1. MR STRAIGHT'S solicitor has not quoted the passage correctly which he interprets as a charge that Mr Straight "contrived to cause any deaths." I made no such charge. He ignores the significance of the phrase "in effect" in the following sentence.

"To this day he [Straight] seems unaware that his prolonged stubborn silence about his involvement in the Soviet espionage apparatus, long after he claims to have shed any trace of faith or loyalty to the Communist cause, in effect made him complicitous in the hundreds of deaths that were contrived by his erstwhile comrades."

What I am saying is that he is morally responsible for the consequences of his acknowledged and persistent decisions not to reveal the fact that Guy Burgess (in the British Foreign Office) and Leo Long ("second in command of Intelligence Operations in the Allied Control Commission in Germany until 1952") were Soviet agents. Mr Straight himself confesses that the thought

of the consequences of his protective silence about Burgess was not foreign to his own mind. After learning from Burgess himself in March 1951 that he had been in Washington since October 1950 working on Far Eastern affairs, Straight writes (p. 250):

"In October 1950, South Korean and American troops had crossed the 38th Parallel and had advanced to the Yalu River. There, they had been ambushed by massive Chinese forces. Four hundred thousand Chinese soldiers had routed the troops of General Douglas MacArthur. Heavy fighting had followed, in which many Americans had been killed.

October. If Guy was in Washington in October, I thought, he would have known our plans to advance into North Korea. He would have sent that information to Moscow if at all possible. The Kremlin, in turn, would have handed it to Peking. If I was right, Guy could have caused the deaths of many American soldiers.

The thought left me numb."

Even then, Straight refused to reveal what he knew about the penetration of Soviet espionage for more than a decade. Although Straight assures us that there was no intent on his part to bring about the consequences of his decision not to act, he cannot disclaim moral responsibility for them. He himself recognises the distinction in other cases where he failed to take appropriate action.

Reflecting on his failure to warn Henry Wallace of the American Communist Party plot to get him to head a Third Party in 1948 to defeat Harry Truman, Straight writes (p. 218): "Had I forfeited my last chance of blocking the third party? I thought so and for years I blamed myself for all that happened." 2. I nowhere in my review characterise Mr Straight as a liar, with respect to any statement he has made. I do suggest that writing many years after the event he is unsure in his own mind of what his motives and reasons were for accepting the startling and fantastic proposal that he uproot himself from England, simulate a nervous breakdown, and assume the role of a Soviet agent in the United States. Straight himself offers several lame reasons and then adds:

"for the reasons that I have mentioned, and no doubt for others that I cannot discern, I failed to reject Anthony's scheme out of hand. If my reasons seem unconvincing in 1983, so be it."

It is easy for a person looking back on a disastrous decision to be self-deceived. In my attempt to reconstruct his state of mind, I took note of some of the reasons he himself lists for accepting Blunt's scheme (p. 105): "I wanted to be a martyr. I needed to sacrifice myself, as John [Cornford] had done." Given these desires and the assurance by Blunt that Stalin himself had approved his mission—and there is not a shred of evidence that Straight disbelieved Blunt about this or anything else—I regard what I wrote as a justified inference. "The likelihood is that, as a dedicated neophyte, when the word came

from the High Priest himself it must have put him [Straight] in a state of euphoria." There is nothing incompatible in being a martyr and in being in a state of euphoria.

3. I nowhere refer to Mr Straight as a "mole." Ironically, the only place where the word appears in my article is in my quotation from a review of the book in the *New Leader* by a close friend of Mr Straight who hails him as a moral hero who never was a Communist although (the words are from that review) "a card-carrying member of the Communist Party—assigned to be a 'mole' at the behest of Stalin himself." This is the article which Mr Straight requested that *ENCOUNTER* reprint.

4. My remark about Michael Green, Straight's Soviet control officer, reflects my belief that his behaviour as reported by Straight was highly bizarre, not in keeping in what is known about how Soviet control officers operate. Even if Straight's story is accepted on its face value and, as he claims, all he gave Green was critical evaluations of Stalin's policies to be forwarded to the Kremlin, this does not rule out the possibility that in the light of the assignment which Straight voluntarily accepted, the Soviet espionage apparatus regarded him as "a sleeper" so long as he remained in government service.

SIDNEY HOOK

Stanford, California

## Jacobson's Story

"THE ANNIHILATION OF THE Canaanites has been taken by many writers (including Dan Jacobson) as indistinguishable morally from Hitler's attempt to annihilate the Jews." Thus Hyam Maccoby in his review [*ENCOUNTER*, February 1984] of my study of the Bible, *The Story of the Stories: The Chosen People and Its God*. Mr Maccoby then devotes column upon column of your valuable space to attempting to refute this suggestion or allegation. I do not know who are the "many writers" Mr Maccoby is so anxious to do battle with on this particular issue. I do know, however, that his statement about my book is flatly erroneous. At no point in it do I make a comparison, direct or indirect, between the Biblical description of the conquest of Canaan by the Israelites and Hitler's attempt to annihilate the Jews. It would never have occurred to me to make such a comparison, let alone to assimilate the two events morally and intellectually; and I find it demeaning, quite frankly, even to be obliged to say so.

In the Introduction to *The Story of the Stories* I speak of the Biblical writers' conviction that their people had been divinely elected "not merely to fulfil an indispensable role within history, but to give history the only meaning it has." In this context I discuss some of what I call "the latter-day chosen peoples": the first of those I mention being the Nazis and their version of the great tasks the Aryan race had been chosen to perform, including that of "ridding the world once and for all of the Judaic menace hanging over it." I then go on to mention the Puritan settlers in America,

and the redemptive historical role they assigned to themselves; the Pan-Slav movements in Eastern Europe during the nineteenth century; the Boers in South Africa; and, in the Marxist scheme of things, the revolutionary proletariat, which is destined "to bring to an end history as the record of strife and exploitation it has hitherto been." A couple of chapters later I deal at length with various aspects of the conquest of Canaan by the Israelites; among the issues analysed in that chapter are Yahweh's injunctions to the Israelites to spare none of the peoples they find in the land. Nowhere in the chapter, however, is any mention made of the Nazis, either by name or indeed by implication. The only comparison between the Israelites and any other group to be found in the chapter is the one I make (in favour of the Israelites, incidentally) between them and the ancient Babylonians.

While he was about it, I wonder why Mr Maccoby did not do the job properly and accuse me of declaring the Israelite conquest of Canaan to be "indistinguishable morally" from the October Revolution.

DAN JACOBSON

London

## Reply to Dan Jacobson

WHILE IT IS TRUE that Dan Jacobson did not explicitly equate the Nazi Holocaust with the Israelite onslaught on the Canaanites, he must surely acknowledge that the equation follows inescapably from his argument—so much so that I took it for granted that he saw the logical connection. He makes no essential distinction between the Nazi concept of "chosenness" and that of the Israelites. (The definition of "chosenness" which he quotes in the second paragraph of his letter applies in context to the Nazis as well as to the Israelites.) Others who have failed to distinguish between Nazi and Israelite "chosenness" have drawn explicitly the inevitable conclusion that the Holocaust and the Israelite "genocide" of the Canaanites are morally indistinguishable (see, for example, Christopher Booker's very explicit article in *The Spectator*, 9 September 1978).

If Mr Jacobson finds it "demeaning" even to have to deny that he holds such a view, he should not embrace a thesis in which it is logically implied. Instead, he should adopt the view which I urged upon him, that the Israelite invasion was a genuine revolution inspired by a new doctrine of universalist humanism; not, as he believes, the mere murderous self-assertion of a would-be dominant Chosen People (with moral considerations as afterthoughts, designed to bolster up the sense of "chosenness" in later discouraging circumstances).

I did not, by the way, spend "column upon column" in refuting the Holocaust/invasion equation, but something less than one.

As for the October Revolution, so puzzlingly introduced by Mr Jacobson, so far from "accusing" him of making this comparison, I made it myself, when I com-

pared the Israelite invasion to the revolt of Spartacus, the French Revolution, and the Russian Revolution—with the difference that instead of relapsing, like those, immediately into tyranny, the Mosaic revolution struggled to implement its ideals for the ensuing 3000 years.

HYAM MACCOBY

London

## Tolstoy's "Klagenfurt Conspiracy"

THANK YOU very much for having the courage to print "The Klagenfurt Conspiracy" by Nikolai Tolstoy (ENCOUNTER, May 1983). Count Tolstoy is to be commended for his persistence and passionate commitment to the unearthing of the morbid facts and consequences of British actions in May 1945.

I don't feel entirely remiss in thanking you some months later since it has taken more than three decades to bring to public attention the actual responsibility for these mass murders. It is all the more to your credit and Nikolai Tolstoy's for being in the vanguard in the English-speaking world.

The facts of wartime duplicity and its tragic results have long been common knowledge in the various Yugoslav immigrant communities. I was only three months old at the time of Kočevlje, but have always known about it and that little prevented my own family's repatriation into a common grave.

My family's hopeless rage at British omnipotence in deciding its fate has coloured my own perspective of life. My parents were ambivalent about "troubling deaf heaven with [their] bootless cries"; I would not ever. I keep a definite distance; the breach is a DMZ.

Yet I reach across the gulf today to thank you very much.

MIRA JOVANOVIĆ

San Diego  
California

## Tito & Alexander

ON 3 JANUARY *The Times* (London) published an account based on a press release from the BBC *Timewatch* programme, headed "MACMILLAN AND ALEXANDER 'LINK IN TITO'S KILLINGS' ", describing events leading up to the massacre of thousands of Yugoslav refugees handed over to Tito's political police by the British 8th Army in 1945.

All the significant documentary material contained in the article is derived from my piece, "The Klagenfurt Conspiracy", which appeared in ENCOUNTER last May. As a result, I have received a number of letters and telephone calls from people distressed by their naming Field-Marshal Alexander as the man who "overrode instructions from Whitehall and Washington" in order to despatch tens of thousands of men, women and children to indiscriminate slaughter.

I have devoted more than ten years' intensive investigation to the ramifications of this mysterious and shameful tragedy, as a result

of which I can state categorically that the *Timewatch* allegation against the Field-Marshal is wholly false, and a grotesque slur on the reputation of a soldier who is rightly regarded as the *chevalier sans peur et sans reproche* of World War II.

The *Timewatch* researchers have completely misunderstood the nature of the (admittedly complex) evidence which I gave them. I may say, in addition, that I am now in possession of startling new documentary material, which demonstrates the innocence of the Field-Marshal and proves beyond doubt whose was the real responsibility.

Churchill's instructions were flouted and Alexander was lied to, as I will show when I publish the full facts shortly. In the meantime, it is to be hoped that none of the mud thrown at a genuinely good and great man will be allowed to stick.

NIKOLAI TOLSTOY

Abingdon, Berkshire

## Time & Style

IN "Column" (on pp. 42–43 of the September–October ENCOUNTER), *M* quotes a beautiful specimen of impenetrable lit.-crit. jargon, and goes on to say "In the second half (of the review), the prose became more accessible—perhaps a deadline spurred it along."

The explanation is plausible, but it really won't do: *M* has got it wrong way round! The pseudo-erudite polysyllabic-abstract is the easy stuff to write: you have only to possess (or invent) the jargon, and string it together. As a writer himself, *M* must know that the difficult time-consuming task is to express meaning precisely, in plain "accessible" English.

JAMES R. LITTLE

Edinburgh

## A Real Debate?

DO YOU REALLY WANT "an intelligent, rational debate" on the nuclear issue? "How the Peace Movement took it out on the Americans rather than face the moral issues of the Bomb itself", *Guardian*, June 1983: "The most significant development of the early 1980s is that the non-demonstrating middle-of-the-road of British opinion has become alarmed about the arms race". Given such alarm—which I don't think is entirely hysterical—it would surely be far more worrying if there was no dissent at all. Would you *really* sleep more easily in your bed if everybody in these islands accepted without question the notion of limited theatre war in Europe?

Don't worry, this time the moral dissent is going to continue long after the installation of cruise missiles, and don't underestimate the "sleeping giant" (the Church) which is at last rousing itself from a long slumber. Why are you so scathing about people taking a moral stand on this issue of life and death? Do we not regard it as a sign of civilised progress and ethical awareness when a state acknowledges the right of conscientious objection?

Perhaps you could let me know what is innocent about wanting a nuclear-free Europe and why this should be construed as surrender? Does your definition of democracy not include the right to question our allegiance to NATO? It might, in the opinion of many, be unwise to leave NATO. But let us at least explore this option in a civilised and courteous manner, constantly bearing in mind that policies that are assumed to have "kept the peace" for 38 years are not thereby guaranteed to continue so to do indefinitely. The truth is that for 38 years this country has lost sight of its own soul, its own true identity. De Gaulle was right to have withdrawn

France from NATO, but for the wrong reasons. Why should not Britain withdraw for the right reasons: the creation of a Europe freed from both superpower military alliances?

It is surely worth bearing in mind that just as an apparently rational person can have a sudden outburst of irrational wrath, so a seemingly rational nation can find itself engulfed in a totally irrational war. The real question is not whether we can afford to indulge our emotions but whether we can afford to continue being dishonest about them. I for one would rather see a million men weeping in St James's Park than undergo a million Hiroshimas. The boffins in Whitehall,

the Pentagon and the Kremlin all need a good cry or even a good scream, at least once a week. I would respect this far more than the bland façade of the robot in human skin which at present controls our destiny.

JOHN-FRANCIS PHIPPS

Pewsey, Wiltshire.

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**Roy Kerridge** is the author of a novel, *Druid Madonna* (Brynmill, 1983), and a non-fiction work about West Indians in England—*Real Wicked, Guy* (Blackwell, 1983). He writes regularly for *The Spectator* and the *Daily Telegraph*.

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**Zbigniew Herbert** is one of Poland's greatest poets. His *Selected Poems* have been published in English translation by Oxford University Press and Penguin Books. His latest collection of poems, *Raport z oblezonego miasta* (*Report from the Besieged City*), has recently been published in Polish by Kultura in Paris, and *Attila's Fiancée*, a collection of "apocryphas" of which "Mirror" (ENCOUNTER, January 1983) will form part, is to appear in the near future.

**David Marquand**, Professor of Contemporary History and Politics at the University of Salford, was a Labour Member of Parliament for Ashfield from 1966–77, when he joined the staff of Roy Jenkins, the newly appointed President of the European Commission in Brussels. He has been a member of the National Committee of the SDP since the beginning, and in the June 1983 general election stood as their candidate for High Peak in Derbyshire. His biography of Ramsay MacDonald appeared in 1977, and *Parliament for Europe* in 1979 (Cape); he is the editor of *John Mackintosh on Parliamentary and*

*Social Democracy* (Longman, 1982). Among his articles in ENCOUNTER are "Inquest on a Movement" (July, 1979), a study of the causes of the Labour Party defeat in the 1979 election which was co-winner of the 1980 George Orwell Memorial Prize; "Trying to Diagnose the British Disease" (December 1980); and "Is There New Hope for the Social Democrats?" (April 1983).

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**David Pollard**, Head of the Chinese Section in the Department of the Far East at the School of Oriental and African Studies, and Professor of Chinese in the University of London, is the author of *A Chinese Look at Literature: Literary Values of Chou Tzo-jen in Relation to the Tradition* (Hurst, 1973) and co-author of *Colloquial Chinese* (Routledge, 1982).

**Group Captain Timothy Garden**, Director of Defence Studies for the Royal Air Force, is a serving officer. Following a tour as Commander of a Vulcan Squadron, he spent a research year at Cambridge studying the problems of nuclear deterrence.

**T. R. Fyvel**, journalist and broadcaster, was until recently Literary Editor of *The Jewish Chronicle* in London. Among his books are *George Orwell: A Personal Memoir* (Weidenfeld, 1982), *Intellectuals Today* (1968), and *Insecure Offenders* (1961).

**Paul Hollander**, Professor of Sociology at the University of Massachusetts at Amherst, is a Fellow of the Russian Research Center at Harvard. His books include *Political Pilgrims* (Oxford University Press, 1981; paper, Harper & Row, 1983), of which extracts appeared in ENCOUNTER (October and November 1981), and a study of *The Many Faces of Socialism* (Transaction Books, 1983).

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